

LAW OF INERTIA

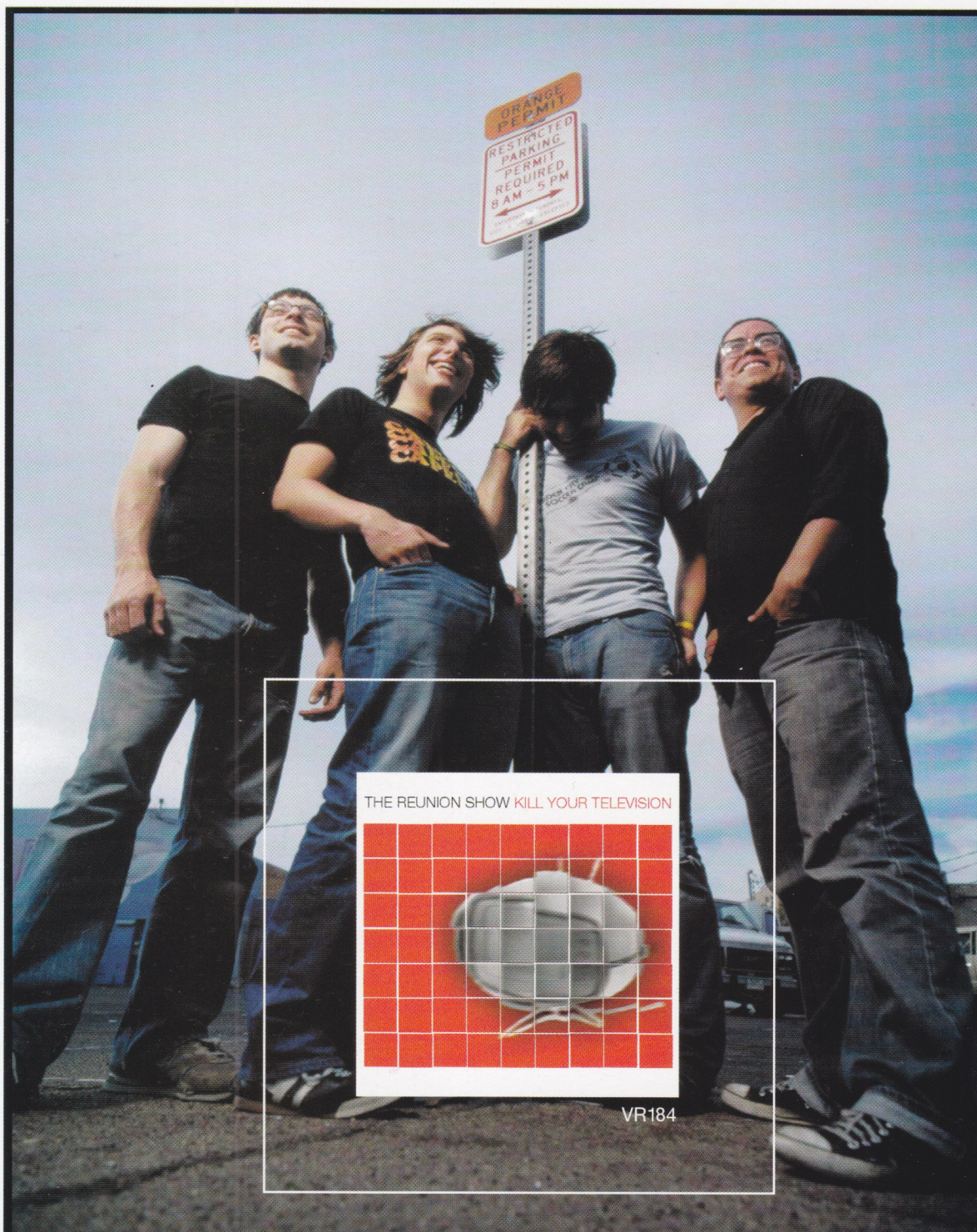
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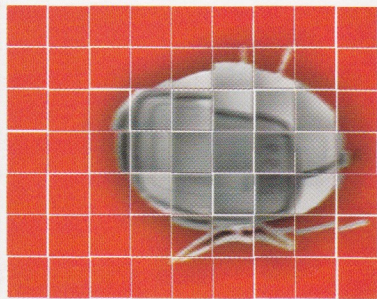
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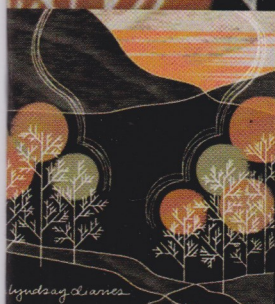
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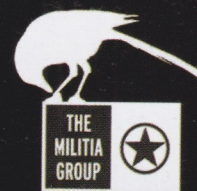
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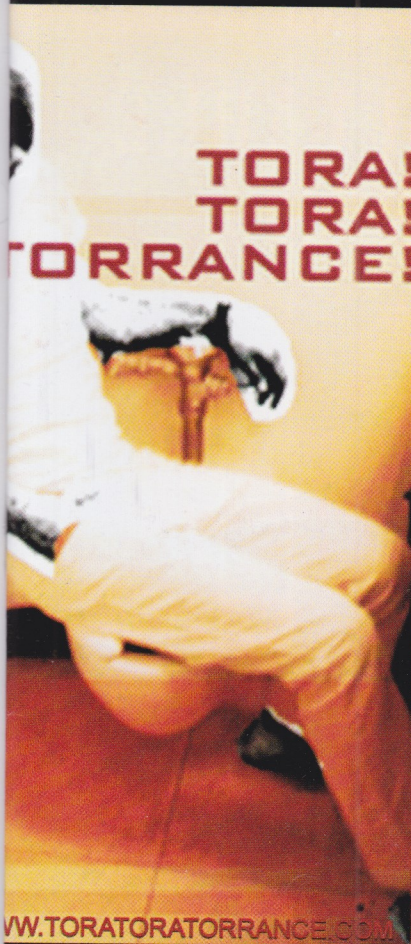


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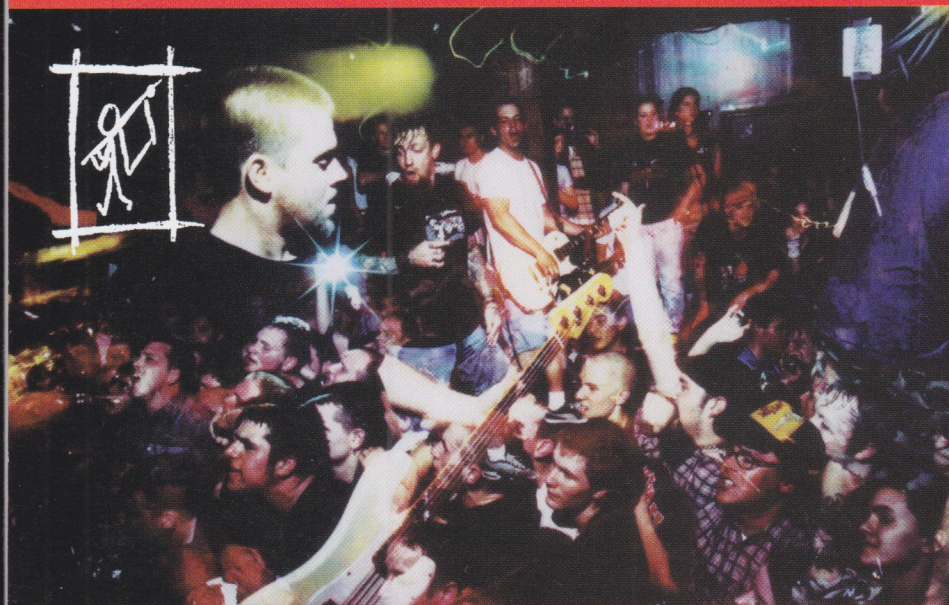
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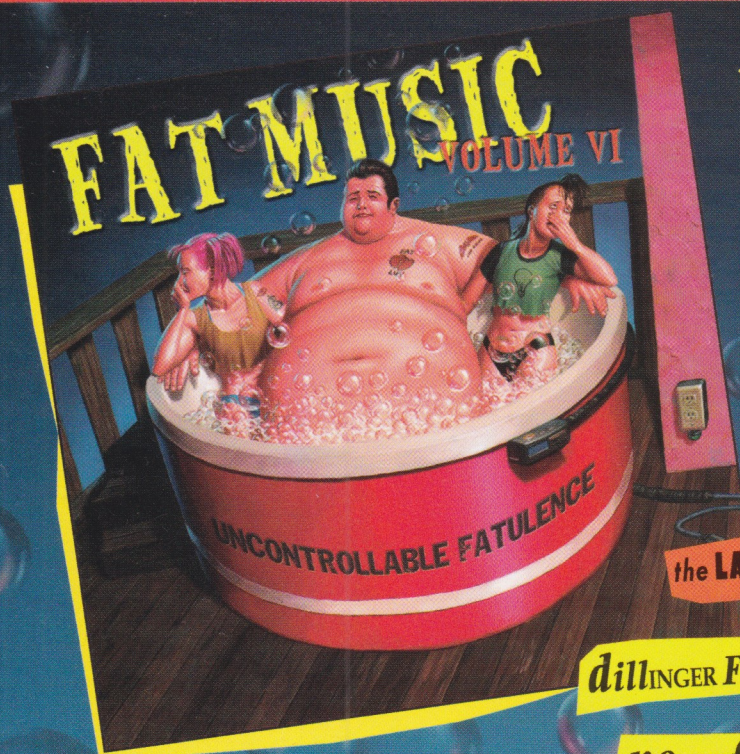
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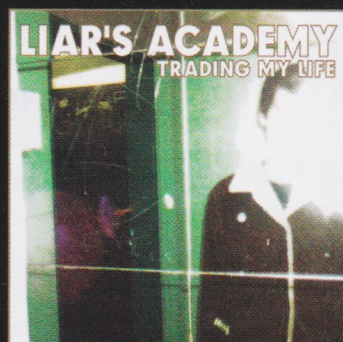
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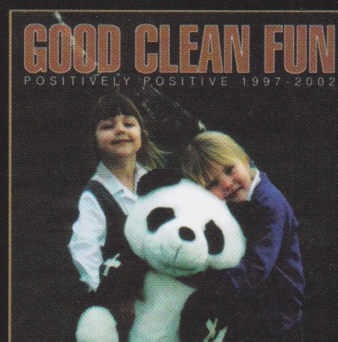
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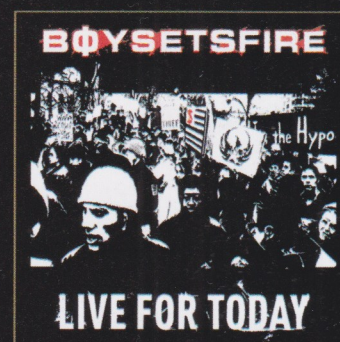
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LAW OF INERTIA #12



16 Blood Brothers

ODing in a town near you.

36 Engine Down

Richmond. Punk. Vanguard.

18 Pretty Girls Make Graves 40 MC Paul Barman

And rock you into a coma.

His dandy voice makes the most anti-choice granny's panties moist.

20 Har Mar Superstar

Looks like your dad.

44 Converge

Aggressive art-rock mayhem.

22 Tiger Army

Psychobilly showdown.

48 Boy Sets Fire

Anarcho-socio-lefty-hardcore.

26 From Autumn To Ashes

Long Island Loves Slayer.

28 Dillinger Escape Plan

Spazz metal mayhem.

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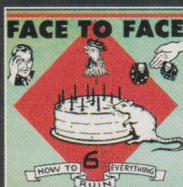
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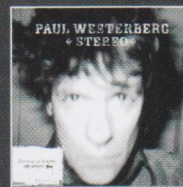
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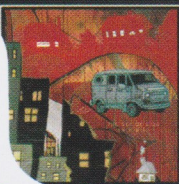
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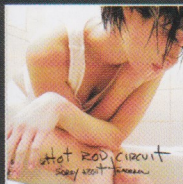
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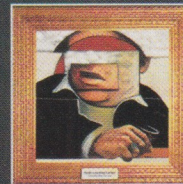
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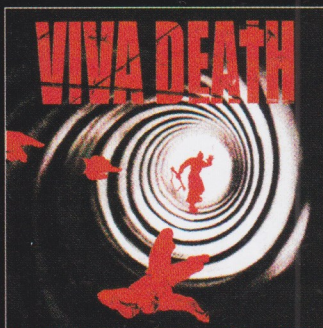
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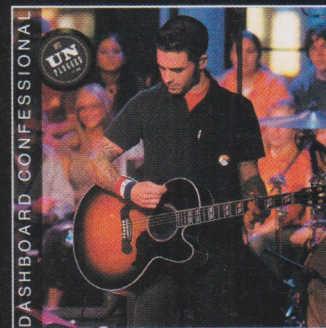
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LAW OF INERTIA

Winter 2003

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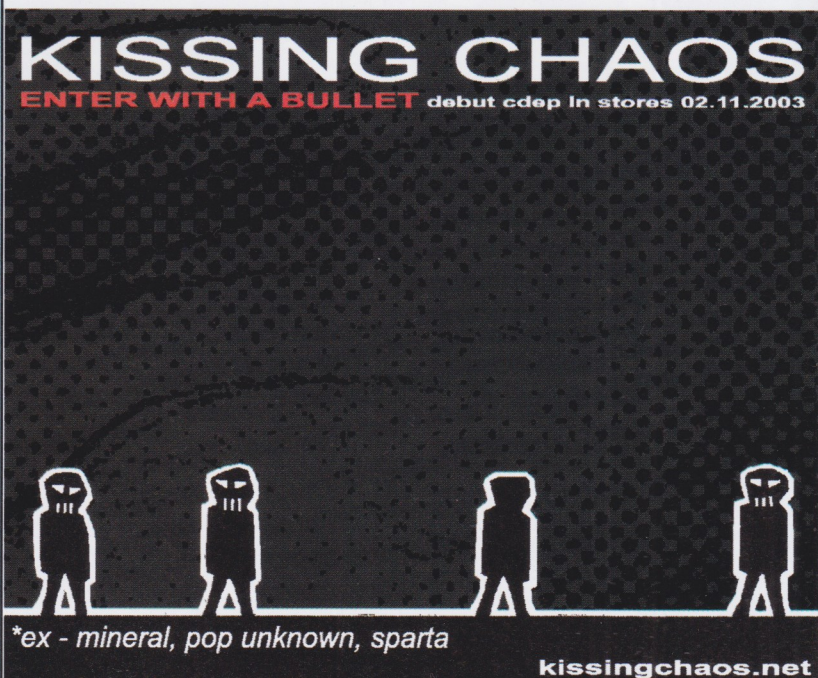
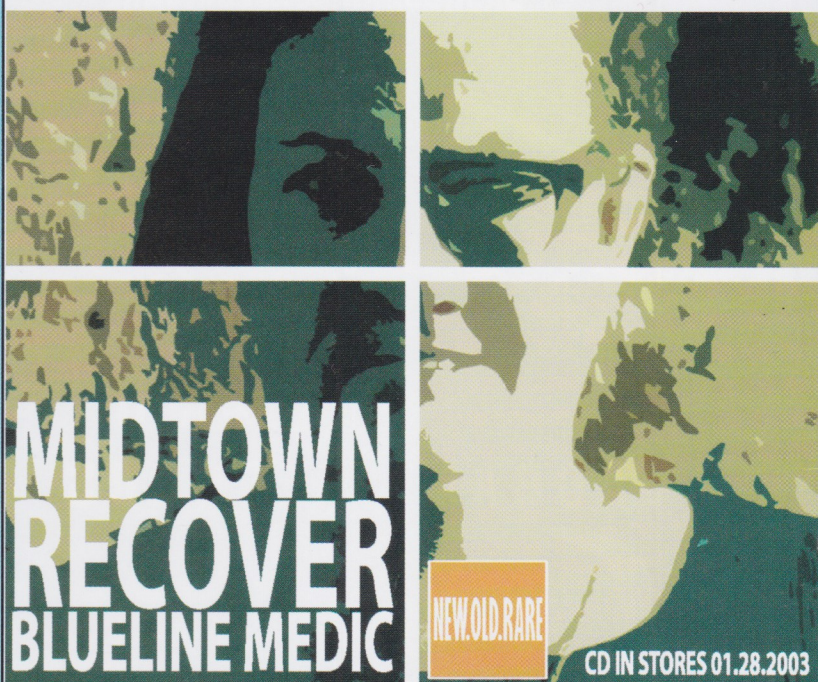
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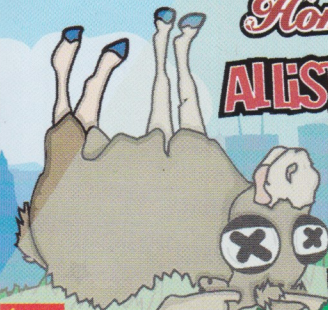
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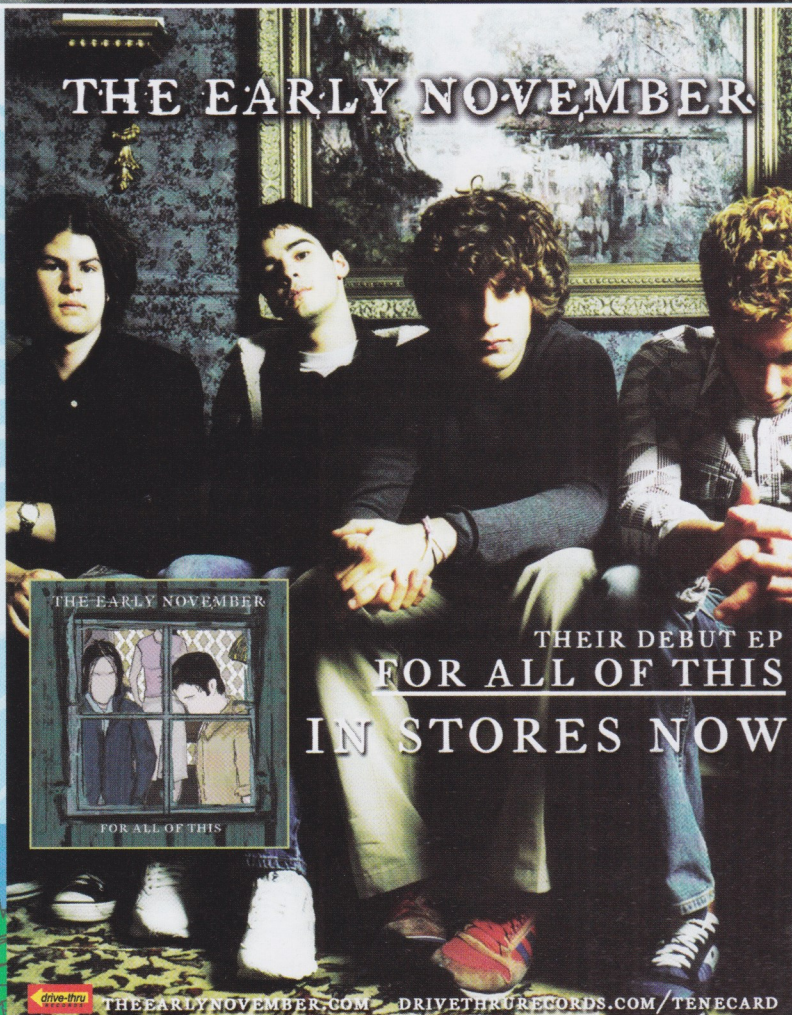
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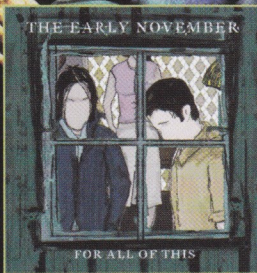


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I was walking to my girlfriend's house last night for a mini dinner-party. Two things occurred to me during my walk through her isolated little slice of New York City. 1) Isn't it great that girls like to make a big dinner, invite their friends (and boyfriend) over to enjoy the food with them? When you think about it very few boys would ever single-handedly undertake a dinner party. With few exceptions among my friends, I would say that a male-made dinner party would consist of instant mac-and-cheese, some Wonder Bread, and a beer or three—not nearly as classy as what any self respecting female would produce. But I digress.

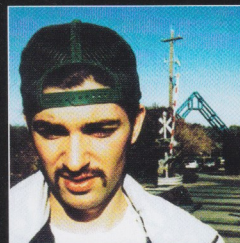
2) I just bought a pair of jeans at the now-defunct Canal Jeans Company in Soho. Besides being one of my favorite stores in all of New York to buy just about anything my (limited) fashion palate would find of interest, Canal Jeans company is also a great place to buy, well... jeans. So, I bought this pair of jeans—the ones that are intentionally a bit faded—and noticed some little scratch marks on the pockets that had clearly been made intentionally to give my jeans that I've-had-these-jeans-for-years feel that everyone knows is so ultra-hip. It occurred to me that some person in some sweat shop in some country with a gross domestic product less than the state of Iowa has the profession of scratching jeans with some kind of blade to make them look used and worn. I guess you do what you have to do to get by, and a job is a job, but man am I fortunate not to have to work at a job like that.

With that said I think it's imperative that I make *Law of Inertia* a success. At the very least *Law of Inertia* as a vocation would be a good substitute for getting some job in some cubical somewhere and performing the corporate equivalent to filing down jean pockets. Essentially... a pointless thing to do. I must admit to being a little nervous about this issue of *Law of Inertia*. Loyal readers of our humble magazine will note a format change: no longer are we printing 170+ pages on black and white paper, but 76 pages of full color pulp. Obviously I haven't seen it yet so I hope it looks good when finally finished. If not, hey, there's always next issue.

So please enjoy our new format and please do not hesitate to give your praise and critique. We feel this is a very important step in our growth in so many ways and we can't do it without your help. Thanks again for reading, it means a lot to us. Without you, we would have to rely on the kindness of girlfriends or boyfriends for food and be relegated to filing down denim pockets for the rest of eternity, which would be hell if you ask me.

Sincerely Yours,
Ross A. Siegel
Editor in Chief

Contributors



Jake Futernick: *Creative Director*

A recent grad of Emerson College, Jake is doing what any post college student should do in times of existential crisis: growing a mullet. The handlebars were just a preview... The mullet is coming, despite a tearful plea by his sister at the dinner table, "Why do I have to have a brother who looks like he lives on the street?"



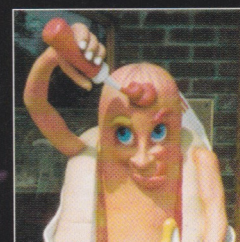
Celeste Tabora: *Contributing Editor*

In addition to working on *Law of Inertia* since issue #10, Ms. Tabora runs See Star PR, documents rock music, conjures up short stories, paints portraits, and DJs. She likes to dance and sing, but mostly on Saturday mornings when she's by herself. Right now she likes Billy Joel a lot and finds that she must defend her opinion to her peers.



Adam Lindenbaum: *Staff Writer*

Adam is currently a third-year law student at St. John's University. Next year, he will lobby for legislation to ensure quality rap music as performed by white people. He remains one of two people on our staff to get laid because of his involvement with *LOI*. Go Adam.



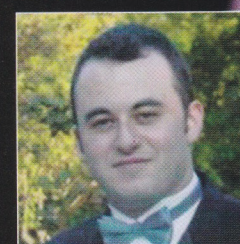
Tim Holden: *Staff Writer*

Tim "Worm Tongue" Holden has been writing on and off for *Law of Inertia* since issue #2. When not listening to talk radio and searching the world for the perfect pork rind, he can be found sipping Rheingold at McManus' Pub in Chelsea. He loves Gandalf the White.



Slash: *Black Death Vodka*

Okay fine, technically Slash in no way helped in the production of this issue of *Law of Inertia*. Hell, Axl wrote the lyrics while Slash merely strummed his guitar—what would he know about the amazing rock literature we churn out by the bucket. Regardless, I'm sure Slash and that band he was in provided the soundtrack to at least one interview or late night writing session for someone on our staff. So there.



du proserpio: *Record Reviewer*

du proserpio, who irritatingly insists on printing his name in all lowercase, is *Law of Inertia's* resident expert on the criminal fringe, B-movie fanatic, and aging hardcore kid. He's been giving favorable reviews to shitty records in *LOI* for a few years now. We've tried to fire him a few times... but it never quite sticks. You'll find him with the trains if you look hard enough.



Matt Neatlock: *Guest Writer*

Matt Neatlock is a senior at Albright College in Reading, PA. He was recently spotted at a Dashboard Confessional show asking teenage girls if they would like to trade mix tapes. Unfortunately, freshman are far too cool for past-their-prime seniors so Matt went home alone that night.

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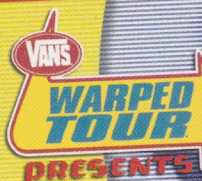
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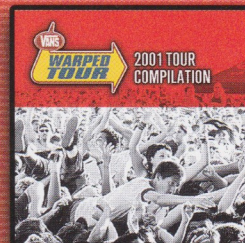
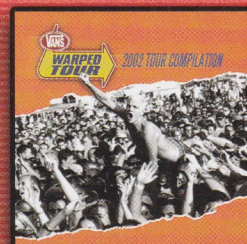


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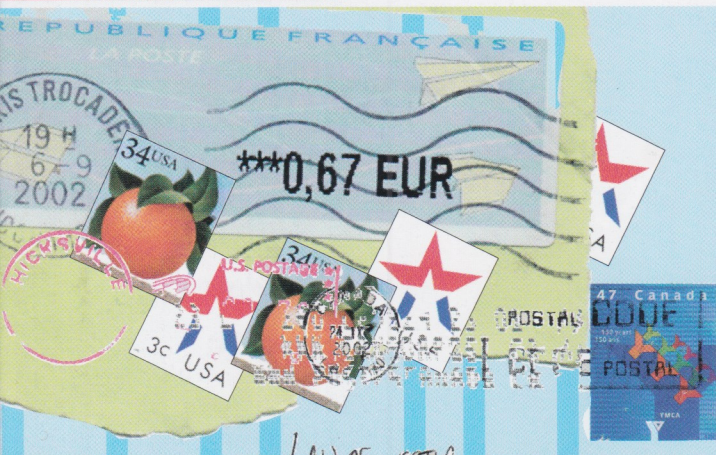


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Letters



Dear Law of Inertia

This missive concerns the possibility of writing CD reviews for Law of Inertia. The particulars: my name is Josh Bernstein, a 24-year-old freelance writer/zinester. I publish *Rated Rookie* and write for *The New York Observer*, *While You Were Sleeping*, *Razor*, *Transworld Stance*, and *Ghetto Blaster*.

When not trolling for freelance gigs and temping my life away I write CD reviews for *Ghetto Blaster*. But, you know, I done love me the written word something fierce and I'm always searching for liberal-minded places to disseminate. Too much of my time is spent writing words that fit into a little box; Law of Inertia and other zines provide much-needed creative outlets.

Though I've outgrown my hardcore and punk phase (except for random moments when my Wax album slithers back into the CD player and I dance a herky-jerky dance), I still adore the indie rock and electro bleeps have carved a sweet spot in my heart.

I've included a few sample reviews at the bottom. Take a gander and let me know if I can help y'all out. Thanks for reading.

Best,
Josh

Dear Josh,

We really appreciate your offer of writing for us, and since we also appreciate any soul willing to work for us with the understanding that there will be no monetary compensation involved, we'll go easy on you. However, I must implore you to not write your own query letters to magazines anymore, because... well, your writing is absolutely terrible. I mean awful, Josh. I recommend you get your girlfriend or mother or something to write query letters for you. Hopefully they are aware of the correct way to use the word "disseminate."

After re-reading your letter, in which you used such hip slang terminology as "missive," "trolling," "gander," and "the herky-jerky dance," Josh, of course we're not going to let you write for us as we haven't quite grown out of our hardcore and punk "phase"-- nor do we think those artforms as the product of a "phase." And, I'm not sure what you mean by "electro bleeps" but I assure you, friend, that you will not be writing about "electro bleeps" and how they relate to the Brooklyn scene in this magazine.

Anyway, best of luck Josh. I hope *The New York Observer* and *Transworld Stance* realize what a truly unique literateur you are.

Best,
Law of Inertia



Hi,
My name is Odessa and the other day I was at some bookstore

and I saw your magazine and thought it looked really neat, so I bought it. I like magazines a lot and I highly enjoyed yours and the ceedee was awesome! My friend and I drove like, two hours outta the city for no reason, just listening to it because it was really good... and the magazine had excellent content! There was nothing not to like about it at all! And I like magazines a lot, and of all the ones I have read, this one has to be my favoritest. Awesometacular! It was the first time I had seen it at the bookstore here in Canadaland... it definately made my day! Anyways, I just wanted to say that. Have an awesome day

Smiles and such,
Odessa

Dear Odessa,

Thanks! We aim to please, and in your case... I guess we hit the bullseye.

Rock on,

Law of Inertia



Hello. I saw your website and [I am] sending [you an e-mail]. I would like to introduce you [to] a completely new music scale which is based on 9 helts, and it fits with human brain wave. Please check the website and listen [to] it. You will find it amazing. I would like to expand this music to many people. Could you link [it] to your website? And if you have any idea to expand this music, please let me know.

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I thought about Kyo scale music. At the beach, when listning to the sound of the wave quietly, I felt so calm and affectionately, and I wonderd why that sound affects people to relax when some good ideas flash across the mind, it often happens in the forest, at the sea, mountain or river, mostly when being in the nature. I remember I have heard that human body and death sympathize very much with the earth. Like human born and death sympathize with the tide rise and down. And I have noticed that human body is based on a certain number "9". In the Universe, the solar is made with "9" planets, "Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Naptune and Pluto." The best condition of alfa wave is when human brain wave is "9hz" at mid-alfa wave.

An average number of breathing is 18/minutes (9*2)

An average human body tempreture is 36 celsius (18*2)

An average pulste is 72/minutes (36*2)

If you heep listening to it, you feel relax and it gives you ideas and hints, also it brings yoursensesand heart, and ithealsyourmindandbody. Youfeelyourbrainisrefreshedandsharp.

There is a word "Human is a small Universe". With the new sound sympathize with the nature, wish you are healthy and happy.

Sincerely,

Ryosei

Hey Ryosei,

Bet you never thought you get your letter published in a real magazine— especially one in English which is either a) not your first language; or, b) your first language even though you have cerebral palsy. Regardless, your idea is ridiculous, we could give a shit about your stupid Kyo scale, and there is no way in hell we will link your site to ours. Sorry. We simply ran out of good letters to print this issue and yours will have to suffice. So, for you readers that don't appreciate this, please send us better letters to respond to... and we will.

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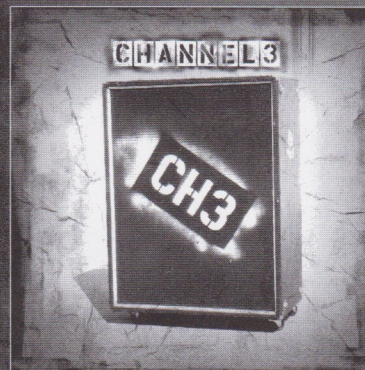
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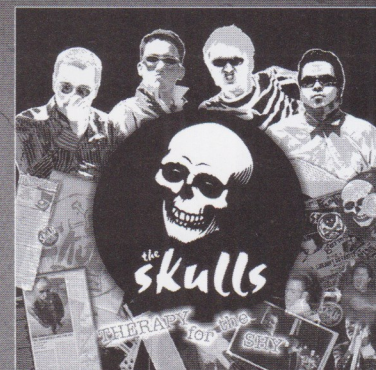


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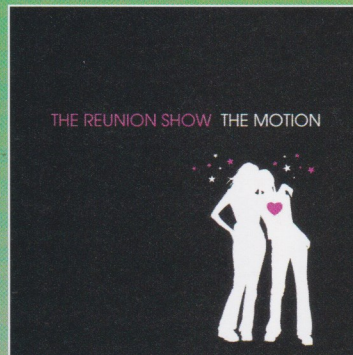


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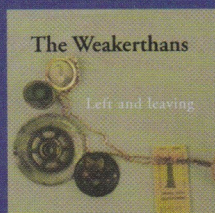
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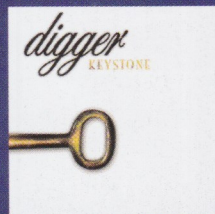


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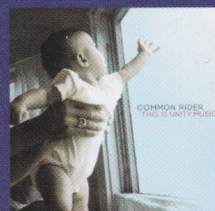
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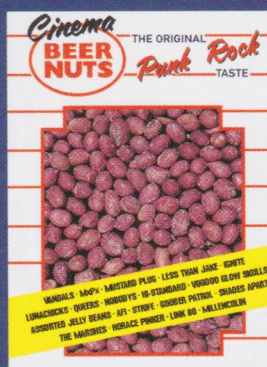
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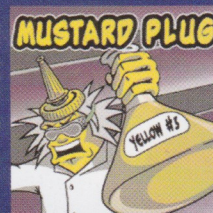


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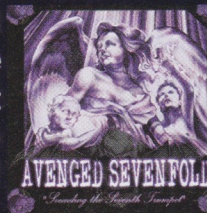
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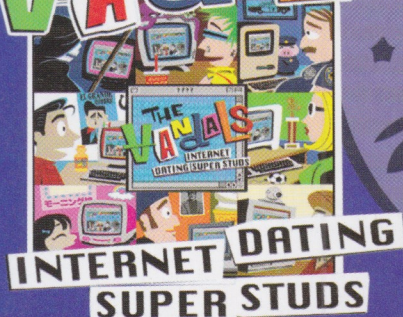
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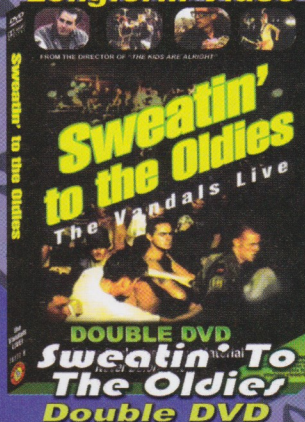


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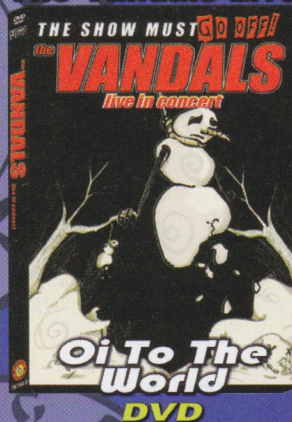


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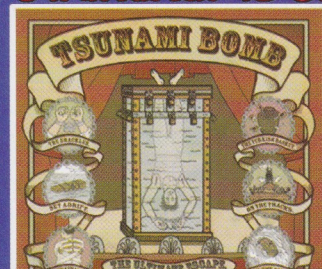
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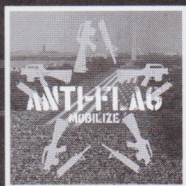
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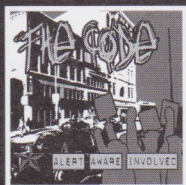
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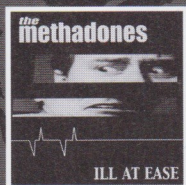
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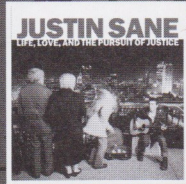
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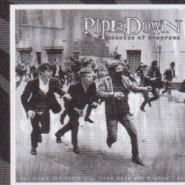
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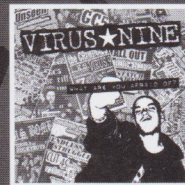
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BLOOD BROTHERS



The Blood Brothers are a very interesting band. I first came across them when they released the record *This Adultery is Ripe* on Second Nature in 1999. A reviewer on the *Law of Inertia* staff— a writer so critical of modern day punk rock that he hates every record we give him— raved about this new band from Seattle. He begged me to send him their soon-to-be-released follow-up record on San Diego hipster label, 31G. Instead, I greedily hoarded the CD for myself and instantly noticed that The Blood Brothers played with an energy and excitement few match in punk rock these days. My reviewer was right, these Seattle kids, barely out of their teens are really good at what they do. Mixing Seattle post-grunge style punk from outfits like the Murder City Devils with the melody of San Diego bands like No Knife with all sheer madness of spazz-rockers like The Locust, The Blood Brothers are destined for big things.

Then they surprised me. First, they signed to a veritable major label like Artist Direct, something few who had heard the band up to that point ever imagined conceivable. Second, they enlisted the support of Korn/Slipknot mastermind, Ross Robinson. Sure, Mr. Robinson had worked with punk rock superheroes, At the Drive-in, and the great Glassjaw on their last two records, but he clearly must have been out of his mind to want to work with a bunch of kids more interested in rocking with bar-chords than blast-beats. I had to get the scoop.

I recently got a chance to pick the brain of Jordan Blilie, one of The Blood Brothers' two singers. I found him to be enthusiastic, sincere, friendly, and articulate. Here is a guy who has clearly thought more about his music than most of his fans— something refreshing to see in my line of work. What you'll find is that The Blood Brothers are one of the most hard-working, intelligent, diligent bands in punk rock right now. And the results are obvious.

You guys are out touring with Glassjaw right now. I would guess that your audience would be more into 31G or GSL types stuff— the cool punk rock of San Diego— than The Deftones type of vibe, which is what Glassjaw bring.

Yes, I agree. We were of course a little bit apprehensive because we didn't know how well we'd go over. But we've known the guys in Glassjaw a little bit, we've hung out with them a couple of times and they're all super nice guys. Before tonight we had met a couple of people from American Nightmare a few times. When we go on a tour like this for a month and a half you want the bands you go with to be nice people first and foremost. You don't want it to be a month and a half of struggle to bite your lip. I think we're going to have fun. Tonight was kind of a little bit disappointing but the people that were there to see

THE BLOOD BROTHERS

us enjoyed it.

My first real question is how did you hook up with Artist Direct and Ross Robinson?

Ross was given our first record, *This Adultery Is Ripe*, when it came out. He has a friend named Casey who sings for a band called Amen and he hands Ross stuff that he thinks he should check out. He had his manager e-mail us.

Ross Robinson has a manager?

Yeah, weird I know. At first we just kind of laughed at the whole thing. We didn't recognize his name. We were like, who is this guy, why would we want to work with him? Tell him to go away and then erase his e-mail immediately. But I saved it 'cause I kind of recognized it, and the more I thought about it the more I was like, "wow." Then I read somewhere that he had worked with At the Drive-in and Glassjaw— two bands closer to our scene than other bands he's worked with, like Slipknot or Korn— and I figured we should give him a call and see what he had to say for himself. It took a lot of debate on our part. I talked with him for a good month and I would relay his questions and answers back to the other guys. He finally came up to Seattle to see us play. After establishing some sort of relationship with him we were pretty convinced that his intentions were genuine and that he wasn't going to make us be anything we were not. We were worried he was going to make us hone our MC skills or something. [laughter] He and his manager shopped us around to a bunch of labels and we met with Artist Direct who told us we could basically do anything we wanted to and that they would support us financially. He would be producing, obviously. We tried to put the bands he worked with aside and tried to focus actually on how the music sounds. His recordings sound really rich and big and grand and we liked that, we wanted that sound too.

Does he know anything about punk rock? Does he understand where you guys are coming from?

I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't really think so; I know that the label doesn't. I know that he saw us twice and once in Seattle and once in Vancouver before we started talking to labels. I don't know if he had a real understanding of our scene, but he appreciated where we were coming from.

You guys have been a pretty Do-it-yourself band until this point and now you're on what is essentially a major label.

Yeah, up until this point all our records had been done by our friends. If they had tried to construct our music for us, like, "write these kind of parts, write these kind of songs, do this, do that," then

we would have been in completely the wrong place. However, they were very supportive of what we'd done before and they wanted to financially support us.

There are those people that will say that you only worked with Ross Robinson because of the name and because he worked with At the Drive-in. What do you say to those people?

Nothing. Johnny sometimes will. We get e-mails trashing us sometimes. I usually just laugh, I don't really give a shit. I think that comes from a very bad place, and [from] people who automatically assume that since they have one set of values then so should we. They have no conception of what we're about.

Do you laugh at them because you don't care about the sell-out argument or because you sincerely do not think you are a sell-out? There is a difference, you know.

Oh yeah, I agree. It's because I don't in any way think we are sell-outs. If you listen to *March On...* in comparison to *This Adultery Is Ripe*, I would hope you'd see some musical progression. It's the same thing with the record we did with Ross. It may sound a lot bigger, it may sound a lot clearer and more powerful, but in every way it's still The Blood Brothers. We try out some new things and probably present ourselves a bit differently, but we're very much the same band that released our first seven-inches on small labels when we were younger. We still write all our own music and have control over all creative decisions this band makes.

On another topic, on your last record— well, I hate to use the phrase "concept record" but....

Yeah, it sounds so pretentious.

But do you see why I'd even ask about that in reference to your band?

Yes, I do. *March On...* has definite themes that we focus on that tie all the songs together. With that record there is sexual imagery in every song that in a way connects them all. We wanted to see how far we could push that whole idea of connecting our songs yet still keep them unique to ourselves. When Johnny and I sat down to write lyrics I handed him some story ideas and we thought it would be a good idea to use them as a framework with which to make our songs short stories that fit together in a larger sense. Like a novel with chapters— each song is a chapter. In that sense it's very much a concept record.

When you write songs do you set out to try to convey a certain set of imagery? I mean, your lyrics are so violent.

The lyric-writing and the song-writing are in many ways totally separate entities. When we write songs, Johnny and I will just write without any

thought in mind to what the guitar or bass will be doing when we put all the parts together. On the last record, if we'd have a practice for two or three hours, the three musicians in the band would work on new stuff and Johnny and I would go out to the van and work out our own stuff. This has really become our writing style. *This Adultery Is Ripe* is really a collection of our very first songs. *March On...* really solidified our process. The problem is not necessarily trying to convey a message— we've got so many messages under umbrella ideas— the problem we faced was figuring out which images and which sounds and which songs to put in which order and next to what. We also wanted to make every song on the new record sound totally different from one another.

Even though we had umbrella ideas we wanted each song to be its own little island. Our imagery has gotten very personal too....

And violent. Your imagery is so amazingly violent. And when I've seen you guys live you're skinny, unthreatening dudes— you're not jerks, you're nice guys— but then you play this music that has all these really harsh references.

Well, it's not so much violence just to show you how fucked up we can think, but instead violence thrown back at the listener in a way they hadn't thought of before. Like violence on television or in the movies transferred to a musical format and presented to the listener in an aggressive presentation of sound rather than sight. It's pretty interesting when you think of it like that. When you read our lyrics, you think, "this is very very fucked up. This makes me feel physically nauseous," but then you hear it and it's a totally different way of looking at music, media, and the world.

One last question: did you guys overdose in Los Angeles?

No, that was a rumor that was started on the 31G website. We never OD'd.

Do you usually hear a lot of rumors about your band?

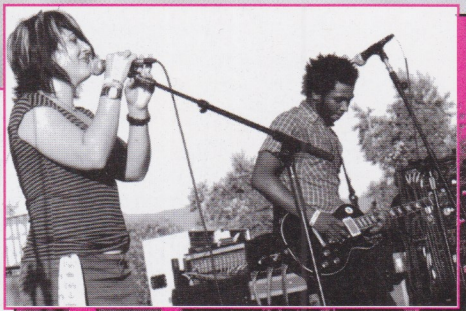
Not really. They usually will tell someone else what they think of our band instead of coming up to us and asking us questions about who we are. People hear about us doing well and signing to a bigger label and automatically want to assume that we do lines of coke off big-breasted women's asses and stuff. Not true.

So the Rod Stewart rumor does not apply to The Blood Brothers?

No, most definitely not. [laughter]

www.thebloodbrothers.com

PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES



Seattle's Pretty Girls Make Graves are bowling over everyone in their path with their frenetic blend of melodic punk rock. Blaring guitars, hyper-active drum-beats, and some of the most powerful female vocals in recent memory. In November, I had a chance to sit down with guitarist Jason Clark to talk a bit about where his band has come from and where they hope to go.

Jason, you're in Kill Sadie and Sharks Keep Moving. How did you get involved in Pretty Girls Make Graves? Because if you ask me the three projects sound nothing alike?

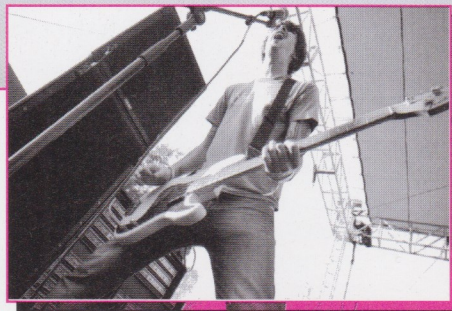
No they don't, and I think that's why I did it— since it's so different from what else I was doing. I wanted to try something a bit crazier than Kill Sadie or Sharks Keep Moving and the opportunity presented itself to join up so I did. I wanted to play guitar for a change as well. Nick, our drummer, moved into my house and they had all already been playing. I told him I'd like to come down and play with them, see what it's like. The whole situation was really innocent and purely fun from the beginning. No visions of grandeur or stardom. Death Wish Kids, which Andrea was in, and The Murder City Devils, which Derek was playing in, were both still going and I had my bands. So, we thought we'd play in Pretty Girls when we were around just for fun. I met Nathan at a bar in Seattle and he used to live in Minneapolis where I was from. He knew one of the guys that used to be in Kill Sadie. Then I met Derek through this bar they were all working at at the time. So, then through begging and pleading I managed to find myself a spot in the band.

At what point did it become your main thing?

Probably around six months after I started playing with them. Both Derek's and my bands fell apart around the same time. I really wanted to do all my other projects with Pretty Girls Make Graves but both bands kind of imploded. This wasn't planned, it was just luck.

As far as I understand, Sharks Keep Moving breaks up and gets back together every other week and so does Kill Sadie.

Well, Kill Sadie was relatively full time. I've been in



that band for around six years. We moved to Seattle together from Minneapolis. Sharks Keep Moving was a mess of a band. We're kind of on hiatus right now.

I hate to ask this question, but does the name Pretty Girls Make Graves have any significance other than the name of a Smiths song? Or is that it?

It is a Smiths song and that's really it. Derek and Andrea were listening to the Smiths before the band started and thought it would make a great band name. That's really all there is to it. It was never more than that. It's also a quote from a Jack Kerouac book, and that's where the song came from. We're not huge Smiths fans, we just like the quote.

I'm not familiar with the song but you have to guess that since Morrissey is asexual/gay he probably could care less about pretty girls making graves.

Totally true! [laughter]

From the moment you guys started you were automatically this huge band. You went from being this nothing band that no one had ever heard of to really big in a blink of an eye.

Yeah, it surprises all of us still to this day. Even though during our first two tours Derek and I were in other bands, we only thought of it as a project we'd do when we had time. At first the Murder City Devils tag didn't hurt us. That probably fed the fire in the beginning, but then the hype just spread. The whole life of this band has been a blur, it's gone by really fast. The first time we played in LA, we were really lucky 'cause we played with De Facto and Brat Mobile, and those were our first tours— they were pretty high profile. We would play in front of 50 people somewhere and then we'd go back a month or so later and there would be 200 kids. It's only been two years and it's happened pretty quick.

I've noticed you seem to have a pretty big fanbase amongst the ex-riot grrls of the punk rock world. Maybe that's because there are comparisons out there between you and Bikini Kill. Have you noticed that too?

Not necessarily. I hate it when people stick us in the category of At the Drive-in or Bikini Kill. Not because they're bad bands but just because I don't think we sound anything like either of those bands. Especially At



the Drive-in. I don't think we have anything in common with At the Drive-in.

I think the guitars do, totally!

Yeah, you might be right. But, since we have a female singer people automatically assume that that's what Andrea represents and that's what she's about. She's a good singer and she is a good performer. But then it's not fair to automatically lump us in with the other big female-fronted bands from the Northwest.

On a different subject, I look at the bands coming out of Seattle in recent years like Botch, Murder City Devils, Sharks Keep Moving, and others, and I think Pretty Girls fits in better with the type of stuff coming out of Brooklyn, New York better than your hometown.

Yeah probably. We love all the bands that are from Seattle. They're not necessarily our inspirations from what we want to do musically, though. Seattle is a really good place to be in a band since people are friendly and open in the music community. Some of my best friends are in Botch and Murder City Devils. I think we support each other a lot more than people do in other cities.

You guys and girl are on Lookout Records. Everyone knows Lookout for what they were putting out in the '90s, like Green Day and The Queers and Avail and stuff. Did you have a problem joining Lookout since you'd probably be lumped in with The Donnas and The Queers more than bands you have more in common with?

Yeah, at first we weren't sure. We thought about that. Musically, we are who we are and we don't quite fit in with their label. They are trying to change their image which is probably a smart move at this point. When they approached us they were so supportive and sincere that we just thought it was a perfect fit. I don't want to say we'd do things different, but we might have. We like the bands on Lookout right now and I'm proud to be one of the bands that's making a change in their label. We just played with a bunch of their bands in New York and we got to know The Pattern, Ted Leo, and others. We think they're great.

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Har Mar Superstar is everywhere. Seriously, the man is everywhere. He's been touring with bands like The Strokes, The Pattern, Incubus, The Faint, and Atom and His Package practically since he made his first single. What started out as an idea eventually became a plan and then a self-titled debut on Kill Rock Stars. He's slapping us in the face with a full-length called *You Can Feel Me* on the Record Collection label, a Warner Bros. subsidiary. This album was recorded mostly with Eric Olsen (aka. Ric Dicolous), but also with a couple guys from The Faint and The Busy Signals. So far, he's the only band on the label. He says getting all the attention makes it easier. I was lucky enough to catch him at home in St. Paul, MN. He told me all about going to the Video Music Awards as Kelly Osbourne's date, writing a song for J. Lo, cruising Europe with The Pattern and playing The Redding Festival, hecklers, getting banned, dating... Just read on and find out what is going on in the life of a Superstar.

Did you see the *You Can Feel Me* site?

Yeah! I like to move around the MP3 thing. The photo shoot for the site was at the Osbournes' house?

Yeah, those are in Kelly's room.

You were Kelly's date to MTV's Video Music Awards, but that was the first time you met them, at the shoot? And it blossomed into you writing a duet for Kelly?

That was the first time. Kelly asked me to go to the VMAs. They heard the albums, they were into it and asked me to write a song—Kelly was starting to work on her album. I ended up hanging out with Sharon that night; she was really fun.

Was it just that one song for Kelly?

Yeah, "Language Lessons." I don't know if it will be on the album. We recorded but I have no idea what's going to happen.

So I guess you're not going to show up in the next season of *The Osbournes*?

Maybe. They've been filming while I've been hanging out.

What's this rumor about a song for J.Lo?

The producer who is doing Kelly's album does J.Lo's stuff. He liked the song and asked me to do one for her too. So me, Eric [Olsen], and Nate [Grumdahl, ex-Selby Tigers] got together and wrote one. I have no idea what's going to happen. I'm not going to hold my breath.

What have you been up to?

It's been a lot of travelling to record lately or doing weird stuff... I just played with Spoon. Before that I went to the VMAs.

What does one do at the VMAs?

I was in the greenroom drinking the free drinks. It's a social event, I'm going to be social. Saying what up to David Lee Roth and Kylie, Nappy Roots thinking I was Ron Jeremy. The Hilton Sisters trying to take pictures with me because I reminded them of Ron Jeremy, showing Moby how I was giving this girl the eye across the room. But the day before I played two shows at the Minnesota State Fair and got banned.

What happened?

I don't know! I was supposed to play two shows, I got this

call the second day, they told me to keep my pants on. I sort of told them to fuck off, they threatened not to pay me, I threatened to sue, they decided to pay me not to play. I got a ridiculous amount of money and ended up going and hanging backstage with Lyle Lovett. I didn't deem what I was doing was offensive. That was the whole argument. I didn't swear or anything.

Was it the same outfit you stripped out of when I saw you? [Outfit: Fringe-lined suit with the ass cut out.] It's not too offensive, but it is Minnesota.

I was in my briefs for the last half of the set. But, have they ever been to the beach? Before that I was in the UK with The Pattern. We went to the Redding Festival and I got hype from the tour. I wasn't supposed to play, The Pattern were. I introduced The Pattern and then The Beatings by doing a song. I ended up playing this media-only tent where The Hives were doing their DJ set. It was me playing this small room on a light up platform with a cordless mic, full of photographers and models. Cameras were going off the whole time. It was an insane media frenzy. I was being a total cock the whole time saying, "put me in your fucking magazine!" That was a pretty weird whirlwind of events.

This was just in the last month! Wow. Are you fucking tired or what?

Not really. I take naps.

[laughs]. That's the key! Har Mar says take naps! But... touring with Incubus?

They asked. They wanted me to do it. I'm the opener for two weeks, the shows are going to be in front of 20,000 people. The guys are nice, so I could care less.

Your older brother, Sean Na Na—you're fame has kind of surpassed his; How does he feel about that; any arguments about the fame, the models?

I don't think he cares. It'll shift back. We both have reputations. People expect debauchery from both of us.

Are you two close?

Sometimes.

Do you like being called R & B striptease karaoke? All I say is "he has a great voice, it's kind of R & B and funny." I had no idea you were fucking stripping! Had I known, [laughs] I might have warned 'em.

That's what the live show basically is. It doesn't bug me. People need a catch phrase. [laughs] But they ended up fucking loving it.

How do you deal with hecklers? Does it get to you?

You just get petty. You get personal on them, make fun of their teeth. You see those people at shows and you're embarrassed for them. You're just like, "here's the reason why you'll never want to come to a show again."

Do you miss being home; friends and stuff?

No. I see my friends. I'll just hire them! On this Incubus tour I'm bringing Dirty Preston, Lori Barbero, Eric Olsen.

What about dating, relationships? Do you miss that?

I've never liked that. I'd rather just make-out with everybody. I like sleeping alone. That's more magnified now that I'm never in my bed. Dating is awkward and uncomfortable.

Well, there are people that can date and there are people that can be in a couple.

Yeah, I can't be in a couple or date. I'm not crying about it.

Well it seems he doesn't have much to cry about much lately. To get more info or to see it for yourself, go to www.harmarsuperstar.com or www.youcanfeelme.com.

HAR MAR SUPERSTAR

Words by Celeste Tabora | Photo by Dan Monick





PHOTO: LAURA CROSTA

TIGER ARMY

BY ROSS SIEGEL



Tiger Army is a band from the East Bay Area that are single-handedly bringing Rockabilly, and their subset, Psychobilly, to the forefront of American punk rock styles. Drawing equally from The Misfits and The Damned, Tiger Army plays against the grain of most other American punk bands today. I'm lucky enough to have witnessed many incarnations of the band, since I was at Tiger Army's very first show at 924 Gilman Street in Berkeley around 7 years ago when they opened for AFI to a packed house (at the show, their upright bassist shocked the crowd by standing completely on his bass during a solo). I've met their singer, Nick 13, a bunch of times with the AFI guys. He is very focused, very friendly, and very soft-spoken. Recently I got a chance to speak to Nick 13 about his band's past and future as he readied himself for a gig in the heart of the desert—Las Vegas.

Can you tell me a little bit about how Tiger Army started and how you got to the point you are at now?

Let's see. Originally the band was something I started and for a long time I just used the help of friends since I couldn't find a permanent line-up—people who weren't in bands, wanted to tour, were good musicians, and who wanted to do it all the way. That's how we did it for the first several years. Eventually I started playing with Geoff Kresge on stand-up bass in late 1999, right before we released the first album. About a year and a half ago we got Fred Hell on drums and it's really been the first permanent line-up we've had.

Do you guys all share in the writing duties?

No, that's something I take care of all by myself. We pretty much work out the arrangements I have in mind. It used to be a project that I did with whomever I could get to back me up, but now I'm lucky enough to have two guys who are as committed as I am... and also are happy to let me take care of the song writing.

Do you prefer having a band as opposed to having a bunch of hired guns?

Yeah, that's really the point I've wanted to get to all along. It just only happened about a year and a half ago for real.

Tell me how you got hooked up with Hell-Cat?

Basically, we had done a little bit of recording and that became a demo that we got to Tim Armstrong through a friend. He was someone I was acquainted with, but definitely someone I didn't know well. I guess he just liked the music a lot and he called me and said he wanted to do an album with us.

Just 'cause I'm curious, how much of the day-to-day stuff does he do at Hell-Cat Records? If you need to

talk to someone at the label do you call him up at his desk complete with computer and sticky-pads?

[laughter] Not really. He's more involved in the artistic side of the label, which is not to say that he has any direct involvement in the albums or anything like that. He has a lot to do with the conceptual side of the bands he works with, though. There are a lot of projects that he works on that relate to the label as a whole, like the Hell-Cat movie he's working on now, which captures the aesthetic the label strives to achieve. Like the *Give Em the Boot* compilations and stuff.

You claim to play a type of music called Psychobilly music. I can only guess that Psychobilly is an offshoot of Rockabilly music, which was made famous by people like Elvis and Carl Perkins. Can you tell me a bit about what exactly constitutes a Psychobilly band? Also, is there a Psychobilly scene in America and how does Tiger Army fit into it?

Well, the Psychobilly style started in England in the late '70's when the Rockabilly scene over there became influenced by the punk movement that was emerging at the time. It influenced their music to take on a harder and more sinister edge than the traditional 1950's Rockabilly. After time it came to our continent and gradually became harder and darker as the years went by. The Psychobilly scene is not something that ever really existed on any kind of large scale in the United States. It's not really big in Europe either, but it's more established. It's kind of pockets here and there of people that are influenced by it but nothing you'd really call a scene. In the last two or three years it's gotten a bit bigger than that.

Do you ever get letters from people who say, "I checked out Tiger Army and other Psychobilly bands like the Nekromantix [another great Hell-Cat band—ed.] and now I've started my own Psychobilly band?"

Yeah, we hear that kind of thing quite a bit. I think it's a really good thing because there are a lot of bands in the scene that are really cool and are finally getting some exposure due to the increased interest in the style.

How much of that do you think is your doing?

That's hard to say, but there have been more than a few people who have come up to me and told me they had never heard the style or considered the style and want to find out more about it because of Tiger Army.

Are there any people in the Psychobilly scene that you've met who are legitimate, bonified psychos?

[laughter] Um, you run across that now and again. No knife-wielding maniacs or anything. It's all good fun, mostly. But I'd say that's it's a style of music made by people who share the same outlook on life.

What is that outlook, for the ignorant?

Um, people interested in retro-culture, certain kinds

of style, certain kinds of films and books, like a horror influence.

When I listen to your music I hear a huge Misfits interest. Is that just my limited knowledge of the style or—

No, that's definitely a huge influence on me. That's a band that was pretty important to me growing up.

Have you ever played with those guys?

No.

Have you ever met any of them?

I met Glenn briefly and I've met Jerry Only a few times.

Was Glenn a nice guy?

Yeah, he seemed nice.

It's funny, you never think of those guys as actually being from somewhere. But when you meet Jerry Only there is only one place on the planet that he could possibly be from... and that is New Jersey. [laughter] I didn't quite know what the word "goombah" meant until I met Jerry Only. [much laughter] If the current lineup of The Misfits asked you to go on tour would you go?

C'mon, The Misfits today are not authentic. As it is right now without Glenn, the guy that wrote the songs and the voice that really drew me into it, it's not anything that means anything to me.

Can you tell me about your relationship to the AFI guys?

We're all from the same small town in Northern California and we all grew up together. We played in the same bands in high school and stuff. Jade was in a band with Geoff and I about ten years ago. Adam, AFI's drummer was Tiger Army's first drummer. Davey sings on TA records and stuff. They've been a huge help in getting us established, especially in the early days. They let us use their practice space for free, they got us various gigs, and they helped us get off the ground.

What bands do you see as your contemporaries these days?

We've been pretty lucky to have toured with the Nekromantix, TSOL, The Damned— all those bands relate to our music in some way or another. A lot of bands we know go on tour with bands that aren't really that cool. I'd love to tour with Rancid, that would be a dream. We did a tour with The Distillers in February and that was fun.

Where did you get your name, Nick 13?

It comes from my first band that was called Influence 13. It was a punk band and Nick 13 became my punk name.

What's your real last name?

13.

www.tigerarmy.com

FOCUS: DAN MONICK

by Celeste Tabora

Profile: As a teen working at The Walker Art Museum in his hometown, Minneapolis, Dan Monick would sneak into the museum's bookstore. There he found Nan Goldin's book, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. Four years later, at Hampshire College in Massachusetts a professor judged Dan's short story as pornographic and he was denied admittance into a writing course. This landed Dan in a photography class instead. Motivated by Goldin's book, Dan documented his life and the lives of those surrounding him. His early style consisted mainly of black and white documentary shots. He graduated with a degree in photography. Dan continued shooting, but spent most his time with music, most notably playing drums in Lifter Puller. Tired of day jobbing, Dan looked into photo assistant work. Finding it difficult to find subjects to shoot, unlike in college, Dan began late-night driving, shooting churches and streetlights. In the waking hours, he found it easy to shoot bands due to his own musical ties. Dan has shot everything from Dillinger Four to Atmosphere, graffiti and landscapes to ghostly bedrooms. His work has appeared in various publications and albums. Dan currently resides in Los Angeles. Photography continues to take over his life.

Dan Monick can be reached through www.dmonick.com



Dillinger 4



The Faint



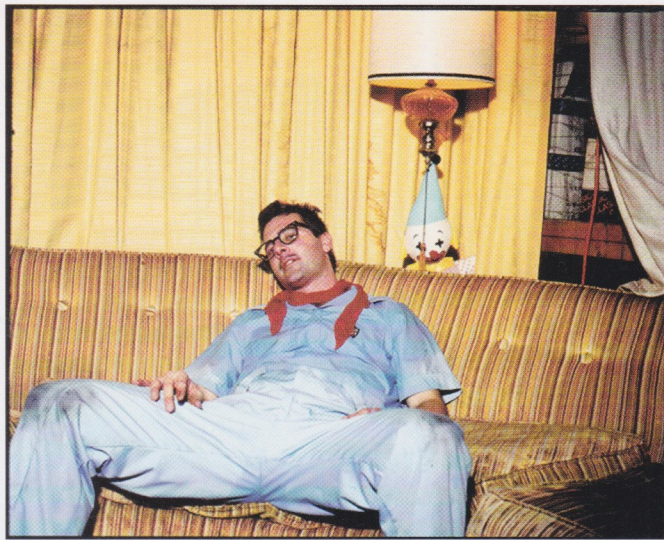
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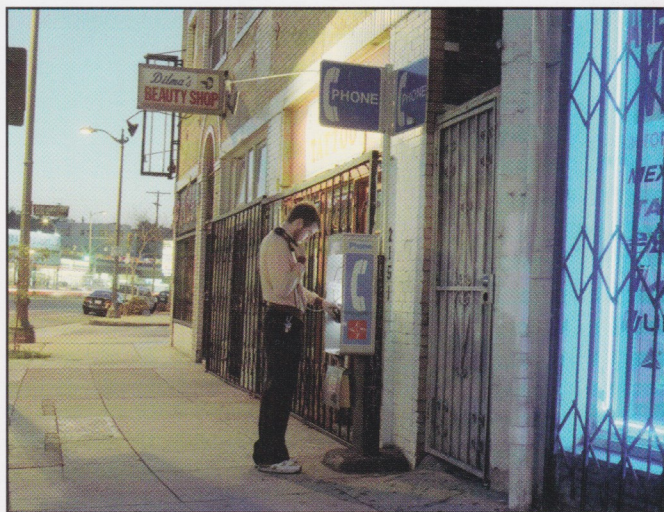
Mars Volta



Green Day



Capital Capital



The Crush



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Slug



Words by Matt Neatock | Photo by Harry Haugen

A few months ago, on a trip for a case of beer, a friend of mine—punk/hardcore elitist—said, “dude, I know you’re into emo, so I think you’ll like this band.” That was the first time I heard From Autumn To Ashes, a band showing ample shades of Poison the Well and Slayer, mixed with melodic injections to appeal to the masses. But while FATA’s sound can be downright brutal, singer, Fran Mark, and the boys are anything but. In fact, it wasn’t terribly long ago that heavy touring caused them to give up their weekly *Dawson’s Creek* night in lieu of winning over crowds in town after town around the country. In a midnight phone conversation, Fran told me about hardcore’s newest heroes and the mark he tries to leave on every show.

Tell me about the name From Autumn To Ashes.

Well, Autumn is a fictitious female character in a story. And basically the short version of the story goes that, the five members of our band are all dating this one girl at the same time, but we didn’t know it. We’re all coming up to each other and going “Hey, I just met this awesome girl.” “Oh yeah, me too, you’ve got to come meet her.” And then they all go to meet her and it’s the same girl. So they take her into the woods and tie her to a tree, and uh, light her on fire. There’s a lot more to it than that. The fire is accidental, of course, but that’s the basic gist of it. So it’s not necessarily the seasons changing, although it could be sort of that, but that’s basically what it is— from Autumn to ashes.

Where did that story come from? Did somebody write it?

[laughter] I was making it up as I went along actually. It was written during this conversation.

Would you say your band, with its hardcore and metal elements, still fits into the Long Island scene?

I don’t know because I guess most of the music coming out of Long Island right now isn’t really like us anymore. I mean, if you think of the biggest bands coming out of Long Island right now like Glassjaw, Taking Back Sunday, Brand New, Movielife, The Reunion Show— that’s basically all like poppy punk rock type stuff. So I guess we’re kinda the odd man out on Long Island.

Do those same elements set you apart from the national hardcore scene?

I’d like to think that at one time it did, but now that’s kind of becoming the standard. I think there’s more and more of a movement these days that there’s a lot more bands that are playing more metal-influenced hardcore than standard, old-school-type stuff.

Do you think your metal sound is the reason your band was picked to go out with bands like Godsmack and Mushroom Head?

Probably, because I think we can fit in and appeal to kids that go to those shows. We love doing tours and stuff like that and playing in front of new kids that wouldn’t get to see us on hardcore tours.

As you guys continue to gain popularity and play with bands like Godsmack, does that pull you away from hardcore?

No, because we’ll always go back and do hardcore tours, like we’re going out with The Hope Conspiracy and Unearth in December. So I mean if we did that kind of stuff strictly, then that

would kinda be a shitty thing to do, but we’ll always be into going back and playing small venues and playing for just hardcore kids. That’s where we came from.

What type of stuff influences how you write music and the content therein?

I don’t know. I think the music is mostly influenced by life experiences really. I mean, depending on what type of mood you’re in, and what the situation is like in your life, that’s the type of record you’re gonna write. I think that the newer stuff that I might write might be a lot less bleak and a little bit more cheerful if you will. I don’t know. I’m pretty happy right now. I don’t have any terrible thing to write about.

So is that how it is? You have to be pissed off to write a pissed off song?

I guess so, unless maybe you reflect upon an experience that happened a while ago. But I don’t know if I’m gonna be able to write anything too sad on the next album. I’m having a good time.

What do you do in your free time that is so much fun?

Well, I don’t have a hell of a lot of free time, but I’m enjoying playing in a band. Usually when I’m on the road I try to paint graffiti as much as I can.

Do your music and your painting express the same emotions or feelings?

Maybe, yeah, because I usually try to paint and leave some type of message, and music has definitely helped because it takes me all over the country and that gives me access to like so many different spots. It gives me a chance to paint in like every city.

How many do you have so far?

I haven’t really kept track. I can’t imagine. I’m not really into the whole fame aspect of it, you know? Or I’m definitely not into the destructive aspect of it. I dunno, it’s something that I don’t care if anybody sees it and whether they like it or don’t like it. It’s basically something I do for myself because I like to do it.

I’m curious: if FATA were a family, would you be the dad?

Unfortunately, yes. But not the stern, conservative, be home by 9:30 dad.

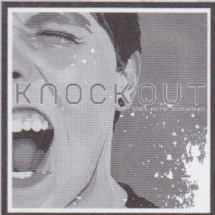
What kind of dad are you?

I think I’m a rather liberal dad. Like do your thing and have a good time, but don’t get out of hand.

Do you think it shows through in the music? Do you think when things are getting really heavy and nuts, you’re there to be melodic and shift gears?

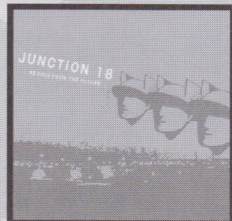
Well I suppose as the drummer it’s my job to hold down the fort or whatever as far as the music goes. As far as the guys in the band go, everybody is just real proficient at playing their respective instruments. You know, Scott and Brian are just awesome guitar players. Brian’s phenomenal! He studied at Berklee for a while and he’ll sit down and play like Mozart and Bach on the guitar for you. It’s pretty impressive. And Mike too, the bass player. He’s improved considerable amounts. I’m really impressed.

www.fromautumntoashes.com



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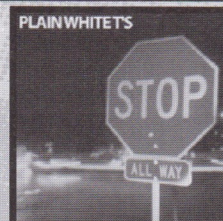
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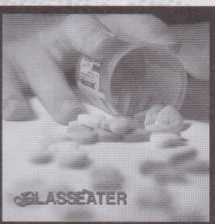
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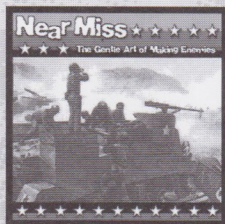
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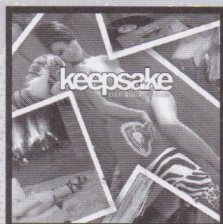
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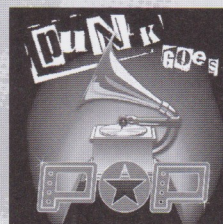
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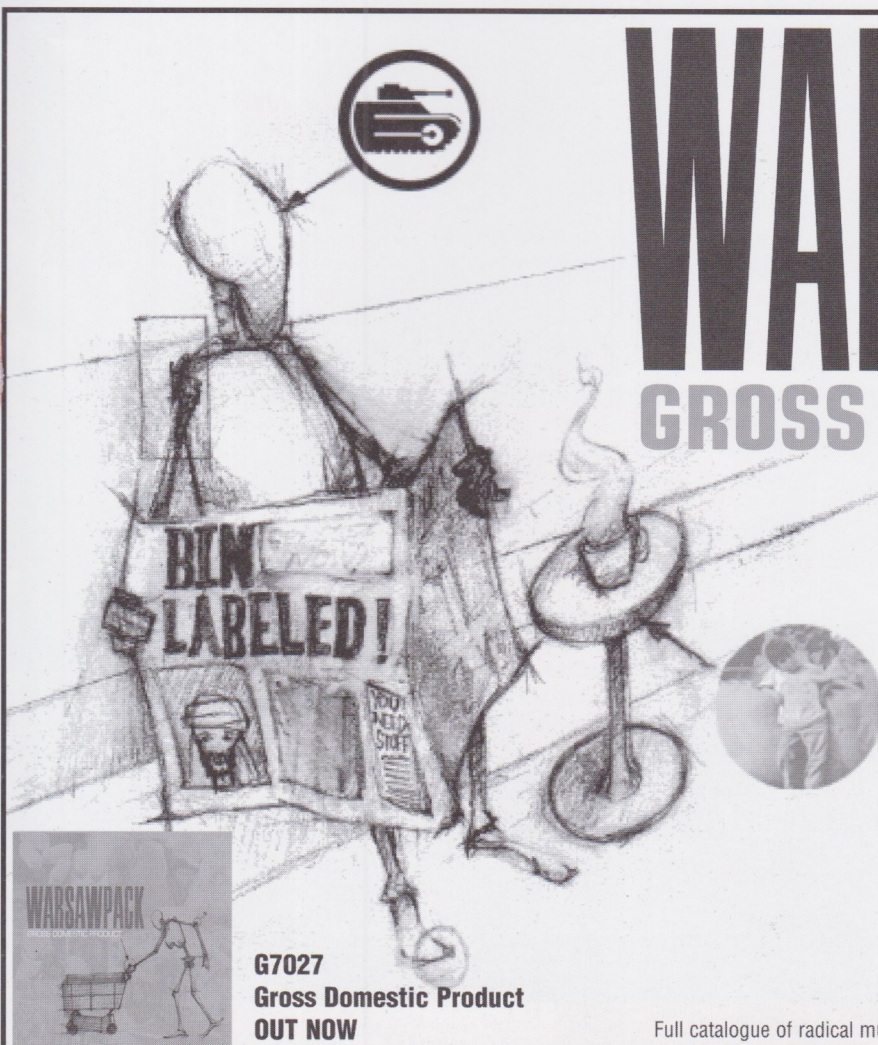
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THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN

by Ross Siegel

I recently read an interview with The Dillinger Escape Plan in which the writer described the Northeast's most extreme metal band as "organized chaos." I disagree, I think The Dillinger Escape Plan are chaos, pure and simple. At a recent Dillinger show I saw the band's new singer, Greg, spit on the crowd, call them "pussies," and then proceeded to completely destroy the drum set midway through the set (the drummer, Chris, finished the set amazingly well considering his kick-drum was virtually in pieces). Meanwhile the two guitarists looked as if their arms would fall off from their aggressive body movements during each song, and the drummer, whom a friend describes as having six arms, made every other drummer in America seem like a chump by comparison. I recently chatted with Dillinger's singer Greg about where his music and anger comes from, what I found was an interesting, enthusiastic guy, who seems to love his music about as much as any musician I've ever come across.

Greg, can you tell me a little bit about why Dimitri, the former singer of The Dillinger Escape Plan, left the band and how you came to be the new singer?

He didn't quit, it was more like a mutual thing. The rest of the guys didn't kick him out and he wasn't like, "fuck you guys I'm leaving." It was more of an amicable thing. He's a graphic designer and he had been doing a lot of that. I don't think he ever thought the band was going to get to the level it has and I don't think he really wanted to have it take over that much of his life. He's getting married next year and I think he was just ready to settle down. I think he liked having a normal job and having a family. Music was always more of a hobby for him instead of a career, whereas Chris, Ben, and Brian were like, "this is what we've always wanted to do. Let's go for it!"

Aren't you always fascinated when you hear about people in cool bands who decide they just want to be normal dudes instead of rockstars?

Yeah, but there are things that you never would have thought of that go into a band when you were rocking out in your bedroom to Motley Crue or something. There are things that are definitely drawbacks to living this lifestyle that don't occur to most people who think it's just glitz and glamour being in a successful band. Now you realize it actually kind of sucks in some ways....

There's no chicks or coke?

In this band there's definitely no chicks and no coke, unless it's our roadie. [laughter] There's definitely times where we're out on the road and we're all poor and we don't have money to eat. In reality we're all homeless, two of us don't have cars. It gets to the point where we have to be on tour to eat. We had to sit down recently and make a decision to quit our jobs and make this band our life, because at the point we were we couldn't have it both ways. We have to do it full-scale or not at all. There's no way I can go out for two months on the road, come home for a week and work, and then go out again. I mean, what the hell would I do in one week to make it worth it?

And you guys are probably one of the biggest bands in underground metal. Does it get to the point where you have to move up in order to succeed the way you need to?

Well, we're not necessarily trying to expand our audience. I mean, the people out there who will understand and appreciate what we're doing is a very very small percentage of people listening to music these days. This year has been such a huge year and we're surprised that a band like us, which is such a difficult listen for most people, could be attracting so much attention from the underground as well as the mainstream media. We went on tour with System of a Down, we just played in England at the Leeds Festival on the same stage as Guns 'n Roses. I don't know about the rest of the hardcore scene, but I don't think anyone in our band ever thought we'd be on the same stage that GNR played a few hours before. We're all still dirt poor and barely getting by, but it doesn't matter— we're taking this as far as we can take it.

So, is there a goal in mind? Do you want to have a huge house one day through the band?

The goal right now, other than the chicks and coke, is to be able to make music without having to worry about where our next meal will come from. We just dream of the days when we can practice in a basement somewhere for weeks on end all day every day. Right now, I have to do odd jobs or come up with a scam or sell something on Ebay. We'd be happy with only a little bit, I don't need a big house. That's not why I started playing music.

You guys are easily as talented as a band like Slipknot or System of a Down, if not more talented. Yet those guys have sold millions of records, are very successful, and most likely have more than enough money, whereas you guys are homeless and have no

cars. Are you bitter about that?

No, everything is the way it should be for a reason... I believe that. We'll get what we deserve eventually. I'm not worried about that. System of a Down's first tour was in a bus and so was Slipknot's. They probably opened up for Slayer or Rage Against the Machine on their first tours, while we still tour in a van and this band has been around for a long time now. Slipknot never had 15 people stuffed in an RV. It's funny, I expect bands like that to have a certain attitude that what they have is what they deserve and they deserve everything. But, when we went on tour with System of a Down they were so cool to us and told us they wanted us to succeed so badly. Those guys think we're so uncompromising and relentless in our approach and they know they had it easy compared to us. I kind of get bitter when I see record deals and cash tossed at bands like The Strokes. It's ridiculous. That band might as well be The Beatles in England. They got paid half a million dollars to play a single show there! That's fucking unbelievable to me! And they're not even an original or a good band. There are bands like Limp Bizkit, whose first tour was opening for Faith No More and they got booed off stage each night. The label paid Faith No More to take them on tour. Then when radio said it was garbage, the label passed out some more money and bought their way into the public eye. If you put enough garbage in front of enough kids for the right amount of time, then they'll buy anything.

Do you want that to happen to your band? Limp Bizkit sold around 24 million copies, and you guys have only sold a handful in comparison.

Well, let's be realistic: The Dillinger Escape Plan will never sell 24 million copies of anything, much less one million. I just want competent people pushing our records to the right outlets so it gets out to the kids who want to hear it. When we put out our new EP on Epitaph, we didn't want to put it out on Relapse or Ipecac so we compromised. Mike's stuff deserves more than a small label. When we were at a show in L.A., Brett Gurwitz who runs Epitaph came to see us and approached us about doing something. We told him about Mike Patton and he was like, "who?"

No way! [laughter]

Yeah, it was awesome. We were floored. Brett was like, "that's cool, I don't care about that dude, I just want to work with you guys." We thought, "this is the guy who put out Offspring and Rancid, he doesn't know who our hero Mike Patton is, how the hell will he ever get our music? Then how will he sell it if he doesn't get it?"

Faith No More also has pretty strong punk roots. They put out the first release Mordam Records ever did.


Yeah, we didn't understand how he couldn't know who Mike was. He said, "wasn't he in some glam rap-rock band in the '80's?" Sort of, Brett. [laughter] He was so excited with us and we thought if he's this excited then we can't go wrong. Even though they've done stuff like H2O which is more our speed than Rancid or The Hives, we were more psyched about stuff like Tom Waits. And we're so happy. We've gotten more promotion on this EP in three months than *Calculating Infinity* [Relapse Records] got in three years. I haven't heard anything about selling-out for putting out a record on Epitaph. We just need more resources.

Do the kids who talk about selling out have any idea where you guys are right now?

Not at all. No fucking clue. I think that when you're young you're really idealistic about everything. When I was younger I was way more supportive. When you're older you realize what is feasible and what's not. You understand things like the elimination of oil from the US economy would be disastrous. How are people supposed to play music if we can't buy a sandwich to eat. We don't need to be rich, but we do need to pay rent and eat.

Do you think a band like System of a Down gets the sell-out tag pinned on them even though they are a very political band since they never came from the underground like you did?





It's weird, people don't think of that band as having history, they just appeared one day. People think of us as having punk ethics and therefore think we must adhere to so-called punk values. It's weird because in every other type of music if someone makes something of themselves people are happy for them. In hardcore and punk kids come to shows or write on message-boards things that are really rude. Kids will say, "I was at the Hatebreed show or the Candiria show and I saw a kid who was clearly into Korn or Disturbed." I think to myself, "who the fuck cares?" Is that what our scene has come down to? Ridiculing people because they listen to a band or two on the radio?

Shut up, you were listening to Warrant and Poison a few years ago.

I still listen to Warrant and Poison! [laughter]

Totally! We hardly listen to any metal or hardcore at all. What would the kids who talk that way think about the fact that we love techno and hip-hop? We have so many influences, why do you want to keep us in your pocket? Why must we be *your* band?

Yes, but everyone has done that at some point.

When I was a kid there were bands that I discovered before anyone else I knew. Like Faith No More. That band is so good and for a while people thought they weren't cool. Fuck that, I've grown up, I've become more secure with myself, I've been in bands and also starved and now I can say that Faith No More is one of the greatest bands to ever strap on a guitar. I hope that kids can move past the bullshit and see that we're a cool band doing something really different and exciting!

I actually once saw Faith No More open for Billy Idol.

Wow, that's weird. But people thought they knew

that band. They had them pigeonholed. I think some people feel the same way about us. But then there are the true believers, people who do get what we're doing and see that we're genuine. People who have us pegged into their ideals have to understand that, yes, our drummer can school any other drummer on the planet, but he does not fucking have a place to live! [laughter] That's fucking horrible.

And people probably think you guys are playing Slayer when I hear more of a drum and bass feel on *Irony is a Dead Scene*.

Our drummer is really into Aphex Twin. That's very astute of you.

It sounds like crazy dance music to me.

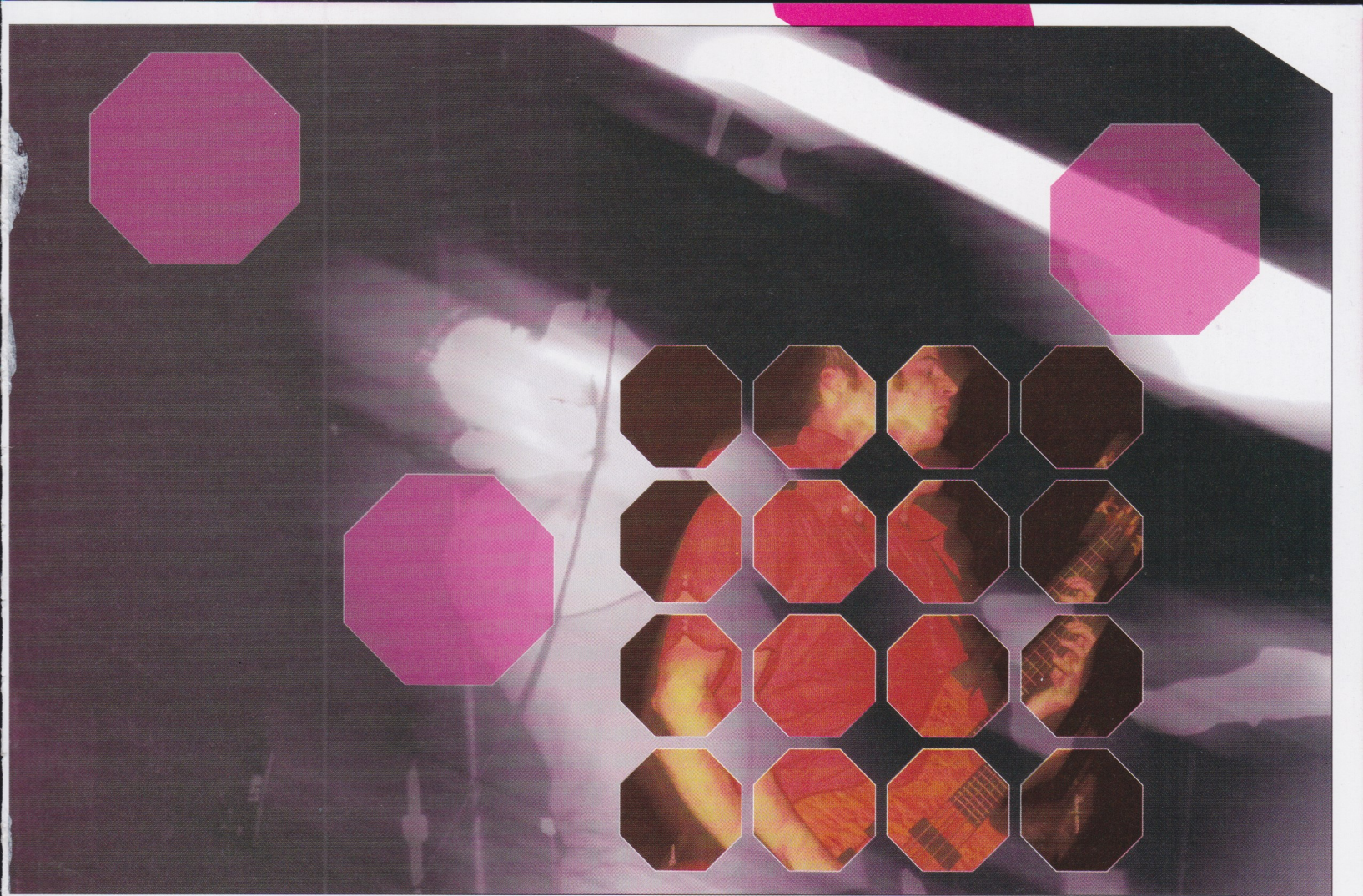
Chris has a ton of influences and I know he has a good interest in electronica. To me the new stuff sounds not as crazy as it did on older releases. Our new stuff sounds much more controlled to me.

Greg, are you kidding? Your new stuff breaks far more rules and goes way further than any of your older stuff. I think your full-length sounds like a machine compared to the new record.

Interesting. When we heard Patton's vocals for the EP we were like, "shit, this isn't very good." We were actually considering telling him we didn't like part of it since we were so used to Dimitri. A week later we listened to it and we all got together and knew that it was fucking incredible. When the Patton EP came out kids didn't know what to make of it but now kids are really coming around.

Is that what you mean when your band says irony is a dead scene?

Actually that phrase was coined by a friend of the band's



who went around saying everything was a dead scene for a few weeks. He kept on saying it about everything but then we realized that it applied to a lot our band stood for. How we don't quite fit in with the hardcore kids or the metal kids or the punk kids.

At the very least, you guys look like you're keeping up with today's fashion styles a bit more than your average hardcore band.

Yeah, we don't dress like metal bands. We don't really come from that background as much as people think. We don't feel the need to wear spikes and chains or Champion sweatshirts to fit in.

Yeah, but it's interesting that a band like 18 Visions is so fashionable— they're sponsored by Paul Frank— and other bands in metal are becoming so uber fashionable as well.

If you go to Oz Fest all the kids look like they just stepped out of Hot Topic. Then you go to an Epitaph showcase and see The (International) Noise Conspiracy and it's ridiculous how good they look. People see us with our Diesel shoes and jeans— that fit, which is weird at Oz Fest— and think, "who the fuck are these clowns? These guys are going to suck." Then we proceed to rip their heads off and hand it to them on a silver platter. We just don't fit into any of the scenes we might be in, we're fence-sitters. The metal kids in Germany are all in black and leather. They think we look like American college kids.

You know, if you look at most of the people in the hardcore scene these days, most people could easily fit into a college campus or walk down the street and look normal. When you think about what it meant to be a punk kid in Chicago or LA in 1982, it was probably a

big deal. You wore your musical style as a cultural symbol and everyone who saw you knew you were different. Now it isn't like that anymore.

Oh totally. Those people probably came from pretty broken homes and stuff. None of us come from super poor families. Out of everyone in the band I'm probably the closest to growing up in a poor city, but even I went to a private school. We weren't fighting against society. We could afford guitar lessons. People say we're pissed off, and when they see us rip our hair out on stage they think we are the angriest dudes on the planet. But we're not fighting anyone. We have our issues, sure, but we don't hate the world or want to blow up buildings.

What are some things Dillinger Escape Plan holds dear to your heart?

Being honest to what we want to do. If we wanted to put out a country album tomorrow we would do it and we'd still put Dillinger Escape Plan on the cover. That is very very important to us. We don't feel the need to conform to what other people want. That's when bands start sucking. When you start writing for other people not yourself, that's when you're fucking done and that's when you should end your band.

Many metal bands these days are political in some way. Is Dillinger political?

In the Rage Against the Machine or System of a Down way, hell no. In a way that we want to be completely honest and not hold back at all, then yes. We think of our band more as an art project— a very prickly, hard to swallow art project— that means a lot to us. It means a whole lot.

www.dillingerescapeplan.com



Paris in the Spring

by Jake Futernick



Take a second look. Anything wrong? The word “the” appears twice in a row, but you probably didn’t notice; most people don’t notice. Maybe it’s the way our brains decode language, or perhaps an optical illusion, but I think it’s the romanticism of “Paris in the Spring” that puts our mind somewhere more exciting than the word games in front of us.

The same is true for the actual Paris in the spring, the idea of it obscuring the reality. The truth is, it rains nearly every day. A light rain that brings with it a growing sense of frustration, making you wonder why this city decides to hide its golden afternoons in a constant grey drizzle. It’s not the perpetual gloom of London, and at times it provides just the right atmosphere for a late morning stroll through Père Lachaise, but usually it’s a rain that begs the question, “I’ve been through your long dark winter, where are my 70 degree days? My sunshine? My walks along the Seine? My weekends watching the sailboats at Place de la Concorde? My love affair with this city?”

It’s 4:30 on a Sunday afternoon in March and I’m at the famous bookstore, library, and long-standing forwarding address for writers in Paris, Shakespeare and Company, looking out the window from the second floor onto the square in front of Notre Dame. It is, of course, raining. George Whitman, the owner of the bookstore and living legend in the Parisian expatriate writing scene is two floors above me, up the spiral staircase past the rooms where he has boarded famous and starving artists alike for the past 50 years. He is having one of his infamous Sunday tea parties, but I am still on the second floor talking to Kevin, Kevin the Mormon, Kevin who went to BYU, dropped out, and came to Europe. His parents? “They think I should be on a mission right now, but I’ve got other ideas,” he says, referring to the 40 euros left to his name, a flight back to San Diego that doesn’t leave for two weeks, no place to stay, a minimal comprehension of the

language, and only a notebook to write about it all.

Kevin is why I am here. He is my story. I’m not here to go to Sunday tea and discuss the merits of Hemingway versus Faulkner. I’m here to meet the people who have come from all around the world to follow a dream of writing in Paris, to start at Shakespeare and Company—a beacon not only for my article but for countless travelers and writers who have arrived in Paris with their notebooks full of stories and their wallets full of nothing—and see where fate leads me.

Asking him how he plans to live for two weeks on what could also buy him 5 or 6 drinks at the bar down the street, a couple meals at a local café, or a nice bottle of wine, his cleft upper lip twists into the faintest hint of a smile, “Well there’s this whole Buddhist thing, that if I can control my appetite, control my hunger, control my thoughts, then I can control my mind.” He is looking forward to losing all his money, because when that’s gone, “I’ve got nothing to give except myself.”

“Hoping karma can come through” for him, Kevin

is speaking to me from the bed he’ll be sleeping on for the night. It’s only about three quarters the length of his lanky frame, but it’s a bed nonetheless. He’s fallen upon the good graces of whomever he talked to working at the bookshop that told him he could stay for the night in exchange for a couple hours work. Unfortunately, this deal is temporary. One of the few requirements to staying at Shakespeare and Company for any extended amount of time is to be a published author, and the only place Kevin’s writing has appeared is the small leather bound notebook he’s been copying poems into for the past half-hour.

His only option of getting out of Paris before losing all his money is to take a standby flight. But with Easter approaching, those chances are slim. Going to the airport to see if there’s any room on a flight that would get him back home to San Diego presents a problem. It takes money—between 15 and 50 euros round trip depending on the method (RER, bus, or cab). His best option is the RER, the commuter rail serving Paris and

its suburbs, whose passengers routinely hop turnstiles and skip out on paying their fare. He didn’t pay the 7 euro fare the last time he went to the airport but ended up getting caught by the *controlleurs*, forced to pay a 20 euro fine for riding without a ticket.

He’s going to the airport at 10 the next morning, still undecided if he’s going to pay for the RER or not. If he decides to go without a ticket, he not only faces the threat of *controlleurs*, but the problem of negotiating the turnstiles with all his luggage.

Some RER stations have lax security and simple turnstiles



while others have security guards and doors behind the turnstile that don't open unless you present a valid ticket. The most common technique of passing through, *sans billet*, is to follow someone who has a ticket, place your hands on either side of the turnstile, hop over the bar and simultaneously kick the swinging door back open before it locks shut. With some athletic ability, it's not a very difficult maneuver, but a backpack that you've been living out of for the past three months makes things much more difficult. If Kevin makes it over the turnstile but fails to negotiate the swinging metal door, he'll be trapped and helpless, ready to be mocked, injured, and possibly caught.

I make plans to meet Kevin the next morning outside Shakespeare and Company to accompany him on his trip to the airport, and as we part ways he flashes a smile and a quick "hang loose" as I head up the Seine towards my friend's apartment.

It's 9:30 on another rainy day. Kevin is nowhere to be found. I'm still at my friend's apartment, puking my guts out. I began the night with the Chinese food that gave me food poisoning in the first place, tremendous amounts of Chinese food expelled with enough force to overflow out my nose. I went on to puke up everything I had consumed in the past 12 hours, a delightful mixture of tortellini, chocolate, and several Manhattans.

Smack! The red pepper I shoot out my nose hits the floor.

Smack! The door slams shut behind a turnstile on the RER.

Maybe that was Kevin's door and he's on his way back to the States, maybe he was caught by the *contrôleurs* again, maybe he couldn't get a flight. I'm too tired and sick to care.

Josh Moore, the next person I meet at Shakespeare and Company, is less transcendently poor than Kevin, more the white-bread American in Europe for the first time to follow in a few of the footsteps of his literary idol, Ernest Hemingway. After having spent a week in "ambiguous London," he has come to Paris with the sole intent of hanging out at Shakespeare and Company.

The Shakespeare and Company Hemingway used to visit was actually at a different location, a short walk away at 12 rue de l'Odeon. But the same books, the personal collection of Sylvia Beach, can be found on the second floor of the present day Shakespeare and Company. Here, you can spend as much time as you want sitting on the couches that young travelers will later sleep on and reading old books that were perhaps once lent to Hemingway himself.

Not everyone here is down on their luck, broke, and desperate for a place to stay. There are plenty of tourists who wander over from Notre Dame, to have their "and here I am in front of blah blah blah..." picture taken for

friends back home and people like Josh, who come here because, "it's open 'till midnight, you can come in and write, and nobody bothers you," he tells me, glancing up from the pile of loose sheets of paper in front of him that contain the fragments of his first novel.

For someone like Josh, Shakespeare and Company is his muse to help him write. That, and a refuge. Not so much a refuge from the storm of being broke with no place to stay, but a refuge against the cold stares and muttered comments of Parisians who do not take so kindly to Americans who speak no French whatsoever. Shakespeare and Company is a place where you can meet other writers, buy books, read in the library, and to some, it's a place where you can speak English.

During our conversation, another dreary day in Paris has once again shown just the briefest glimpse of how nice this city could be. The bells of Notre Dame

literati being talked about in magazines like the *Fusac* and *Paris Voice*, English language guides to housing, employment, drinking, dining, and events in Paris.

For those visiting Paris, it can be a terribly confusing and frustrating experience. Josh, the guy from Minnesota, posted a story on his website, regardingwhatever.com, simply about the difficulties he faced trying to find a suitable place to relieve his bladder and how much it led him to hate Paris. For those who live here, the rules are quite simple. If you have to piss, there are three options: Sneak into a café, find a discreet side-street to pee, or simply go in the middle of the street. For all its pomp and circumstance, parts of Paris would better pass for a third world slum than a playground of the rich and beautiful.

The rules of Paris also extend beyond bodily functions: Go to a club without any girls by your side, and entry "Ees not posseeble." Any reason will do, "C'est complet. The club is full," "Votres vêtements n'est pas suffit."

Roll up to the exact same club when it's even more full and your clothes are even worse, and if you've got girls, especially hot ones, entrance is not a problem.

There are also rules to finding any street in Paris, no matter how small. If you know the metro stop and the street address, no problem. The flyer for the Kilometer Zero event says 7 Cité Chaptal, 9e, M° Blanche. The address is self evident, "9e" refers to the *arrondissement*, and M° is the metro stop. Outside every

metro station, is a street map of all streets within a 5-minute walk or so, which is where I find myself standing next to a young blond girl.

"Eh, vous connaissez, eh, la rue Cité Chaptal?" she asks.

"Eh, non. Je cherche pour le meme truc," I tell her, fairly certain from her accent that she speaks English. We both stare at the map, the smell of roasting almonds drifting by as the windmill at Moulin Rouge spins across the street.

"Vous allez ou?" I ask, still enjoying speaking in French even though by now I'm positive she speaks English.

"Eh, le fete pour le magazine."

"Moi aussi," and with that, we switch over to English and start walking down the street. She found out about the event from *the Fusac* and I saw a flyer hanging on the wall at Shakespeare and Company, but arriving at Theatre 347, the venue for the evening, it has the distinct feeling of some underground Paris art scene. I spent six months living in Paris the previous year but never went to anything like this.

Paris is so big with so much going on you could spend a lifetime here and never see half of it. There are rich Long Islanders and celebrities having drinks at Man



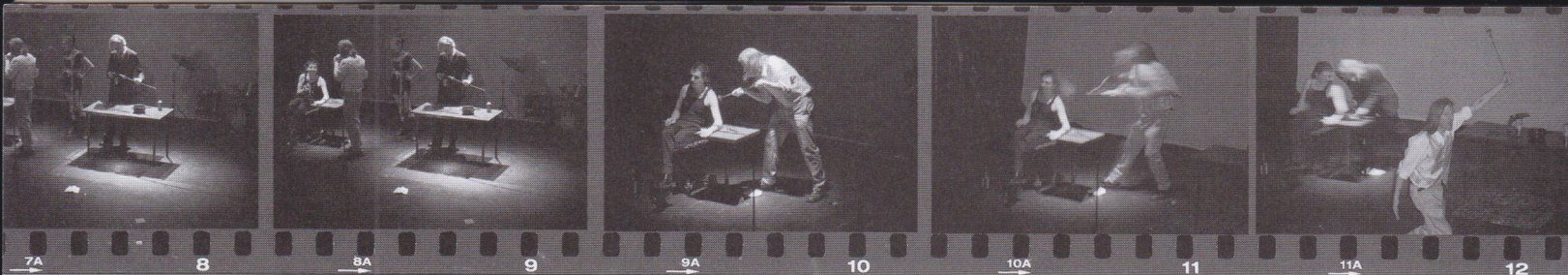
"Here, you can spend as much time as you want sitting on the couches that young travelers will later sleep on and reading old books that were perhaps once lent to Hemingway himself."

are peeling, the sun has poked through the clouds just before setting and the buildings in the window over Josh's shoulder have begun to turn that magical golden color found only in Paris limestone.

The KMZ Project

The Kilometer Zero Project is the most significant and closely tied artistic project to Shakespeare and Company. Named for Shakespeare and Company's location within Kilometer Zero—a marker signifying the center of France, both spiritually (the actual marker is directly in front of Notre Dame) and geographically (all points in France can be measured in kilometers from this point), the project was first conceived as a web site in the spring of 2000. It soon evolved into a literary magazine premiering in the spring of the following year which has now grown into a creative venture combining not only a website and a literary magazine, but a series of performances including photography, writing, music, theatre, film, gallery installations, and just about any other conceivable form of art.

Through pure chance, there happens to be the third in a series of Kilometer Zero "Venue Shows" the week I'm in Paris. The perfect opportunity to see firsthand some of this recently hyped "Fourth Wave" of expatriate



Ray, gays in the Marais, trip-hop at Oberkampf, hip-hop at Clichy, models at Cabaret, Americans at The Long Hop, Japanese tourists at Galleries Lafayette, prostitutes on rue St. Denis, traditional brasseries in the 8e, Café de Fleur, Le Duex Magots, Magic: the Gathering at the comic shops near the Sorbonne, au pairs in the Champs de Mars, 24-hour police protection outside controversial politicians' houses, and underground literary parties at squatted playhouses....

Theatre 347, built at the turn of the century, gets its name from the 347 seats in the house. Abandoned about a decade ago, it was squatted last April by a troupe of young French actors and turned into a successful venue.

"I really don't think they can be published on their own. I mean I come up with them," says the in-touch-with-his-sensitive-side guy on the merits of haiku to the I-go-to-literary-parties-and-have-writers-hit-on-me girl, "and then I work them into my dee-a-logue." I think he catches me smirking at this stereotypically pretentious conversation from the corner of his eye and I decide to move on, hoping it's not one of those parties.

After a premiere of *Pistols of Paris*, a short film by Tabore Rector, a dance troupe comes out to perform. The performance alternates back and forth between French and English, something about cycles of death and rebirth, "War! La Guerre! J'accuse! I refuse!" and such but I can't really follow what's going on because I'm on the verge of passing out from the overpowering chocolatey-sweet smell of hash all around me, of which I've already sampled.

Some guy from the *International Herald Tribune* was supposed to be the featured guest speaker for the evening, but after booking him months in advance, he backed out at the last moment. So with a less than enthusiastic explanation, more of a "hey we got screwed with our guest speaker, so here's this guy... who... I hope doesn't suck too bad... but no really, he's a great guy... who hopefully doesn't suck... too much. And so here he is ladies and germs." Scattered applause.

"I was brought up in the sewers of Paris," whines the whiny guy, a cross between Steven Wright and Woody Allen, "where I learned to play the accordion."

He monotonizes on for a while about "baseball bats on Bechstein pianos," "the sexual failures of sailors," until he finally wraps up with, "Tomorrow is Wednesday. And tomorrow it will rain."

This gets a response from the audience, maybe because of its blunt cynicism, and maybe because he's finally off stage.

"Kilometer Zero is an association of artists and writers who help other artists and writers," explains

Jeremy Mercer, a co-founder of the project who is now onstage.

"The unfortunate truth of this is that it takes money for this to happen. Money we don't always have. In case you haven't noticed, there are no ads in our magazine, there is no corporate sponsorship, and all we ask in return is five euros or so for a copy. So in the latest Kilometer Zero money-making scheme, we have something really special for you," he says, followed by a dramatic pause and the setting up of various tools, tables, and chairs.

"LIVE BRANDING!"

"Tonight and tonight only, for just five euros, you can come up here on stage and choose a diamond, heart,

"And so now we open up the chance to you, the audience, to make your donation of 5 euros and come up here and get branded like our friend Thomas."

I don't know if Jeremy and Thomas actually expected someone would go up there, but soon enough they were counting to three, last call for another volunteer.

I can't really tell you what I thought of while Jeremy was counting down. I thought of nothing, the ASA of the film in my camera, the last time I changed my socks. One of those things where you blankly stare out into the room, you're taking in the visual stimuli, but it's not registering. Looking without seeing.

"Three."

Frustration washes over me in an awesome wave when I realize I've missed my chance.

Backstage, I offer to get branded during the open-mic part of the evening, but you can always count on the cops showing at the worst time. In the middle of the conversation, Jeremy has to run outside and deal with the police. They didn't come into the theater and break things up, but they put enough of a damper on the mood of things to make Jeremy and Thomas apprehensive of how the crowd would react to another live branding on stage, still a little unsure what the response was to the first one.

Jeremy returns and after some secret conferencing between the two of them, Jeremy grabs my shoulders, looks me square in the eye and asks me if I really want to do this.

"Yup" I reply, staring back at him.

"All right then, here's my card. Call me tomorrow and you can come by the squat and we'll do it."

When people ask me why I got the brand, there are a bunch of stories I can tell, maybe something about joining "the cult of the spade," but if I feel like telling the real story, it goes something like this.

The branding had something to do with leaving my life at home for a life abroad. New language, new city, new friends, a new life. Six months later, that way of life was gone, fading like a dream in the early morning. Returning to the U.S. pushed my experience in Paris farther and farther from what I could still tangibly relate to. I could talk on the phone or write an e-mail to a few of my friends, but I felt little connection to my Parisian life anymore.

And then I went back, and it was like falling back asleep, into that same dream. Like anything dreamt and then revisited, it was of course not exactly the same the second time around. Some of my best friends were no longer there; the city seemed a little colder, a little less forgiving.

But now I have something from that dream with me



club, or spade to be indelibly marked on your body. Do we have a first volunteer in the audience?"

A loaded question.

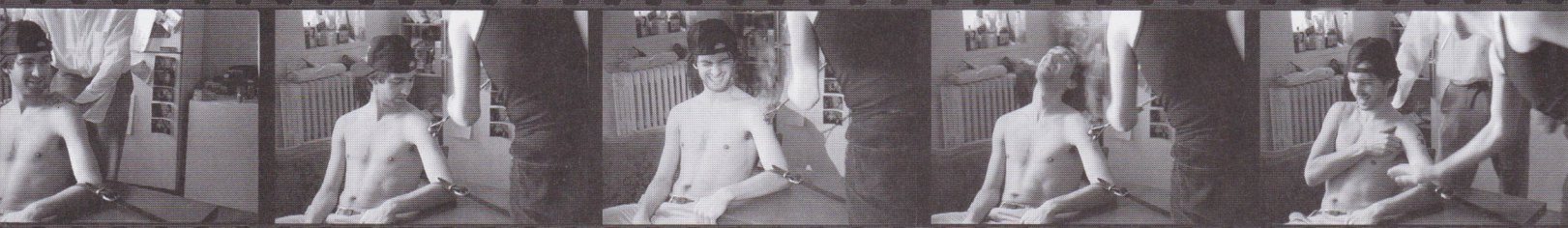
"Thomas? Yes, Thomas Pancake, ladies and gentlemen. Our first volunteer for the first ever Kilometer Zero live branding."

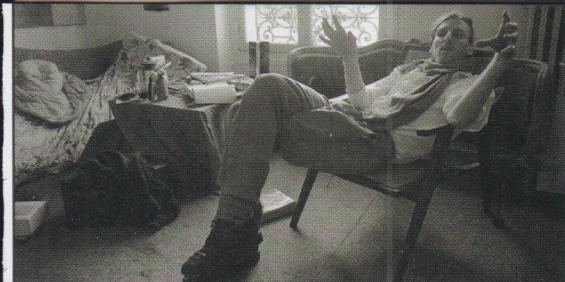
"The spade, Jeremy, I'm going to go with the spade," says Thomas after brief deliberation.

The theater is dead silent, save for the hissing sound of the blowtorch as it heats the spade to a nice glowing red.

The audience gasps and a small puff of smoke rises in the spotlight.

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Jeremy

at all times, something that reminds me of a former life, and when I get the chills thinking of some magical Spring day I once spent, the sensation is especially strong on a certain spot on my left shoulder.

The location where the branding took place is a story in itself. The French government has long been known for its support of the arts. There is a long tradition in Paris of perfectly inhabitable buildings going vacant for a couple years so various artists, writers, sculptors, etc... can set up shop and live and work rent free. Running water, electricity, and phone lines all remain operational.

The squat where Kilometer Zero is located also hosts a series of underground discos, "enlightenment" being the password for that night's party.

It was the second party in a week, a little game of cat and mouse playing out between those throwing the parties and the French authorities. Squats usually have a lifespan of about two years and with this one nearing its demise, a return to "real" occupation by paying tenants, the disco guys were going to make sure that they were milking the last days of the squat for all it was worth. The disco tonight was their way of signaling to the powers that be that they were ready to get caught and shut down whenever the authorities felt like getting around to it.

This meant Kilometer Zero was going to have to look for a new squat some time in the near future. George was pressuring them to come back to Shakespeare and Company, the place where Kilometer Zero got its start, but everyone was a bit apprehensive seeing as that might be seen as a step backwards. This however, was not my problem.

Someone setting up for the party let me in at the door and walking into the Kilometer Zero offices, I found what you would probably expect from the offices of a small ex-

pat literary magazine. A couple computers surrounded by stacks of magazines, a cat patrolling the premises, a dartboard torn to shreds from having so many darts thrown at it, and Jeremy and Thomas hanging out with a few of their friends.

We talked for a while, stories about we ended up in Paris, the writing we were doing, what Kilometer had in store for the future. Then with a serious tone, Jeremy got up from his chair and announced,

"Sir, the hour approaches."

I wasn't so much scared as I was nervously excited as they began the process, strapping my arm down to the table, lighting the blowtorch, heating the spade. I signed a waiver releasing Kilometer Zero from any responsibility if greater harm than what was intended befell me. Things were moving quickly now.

A shot of brandy? Sure.

And then I felt the heat. The brand was maybe six inches away from my arm, poised to strike, and it was already feeling a bit uncomfortable, like standing too close to a hot oven. This time it was Thomas who was holding the brand. He was branded by Jeremy, and now had the honor of branding me. When it was done, he gave me this thousand yard stare and mumbled, "Wow, if you ever get the chance you really should do that to someone else," before heading out with his friends to catch the remaining sunlight of the day.

The question people always ask me is if it hurt. The truth is no, not really. When you burn yourself on the stove, it hurts more after the fact, the skin blistering, nerves magnifying the pain. With branding, the burn is severe enough to kill the nerves instantly. So there is the anticipation of pain, then one quick hot flash, followed by the acrid smell of burning flesh.

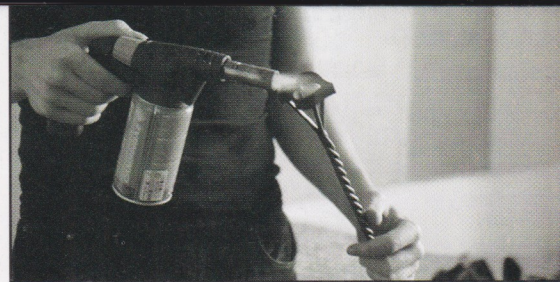
Thomas had never branded anyone in his life and his first attempt left only half a spade on my arm. It stung a little more the second time he pressed the red hot metal into my arm, but after that, there was a tightening sensation to my skin, but no more pain, just one massive adrenaline and endorphin rush.

It's my last day in Paris and I'm on my way to Shakespeare and Company for one last visit. I'm going in part to find out about these famous Sunday afternoon tea parties, but mostly I'm going to see if I can find Kevin, to see what he's doing if he didn't make his flight, now that he's down to about 20 euros or so and still has a week and a half to go.

So many writers have been down and out in Paris. Orwell wrote a book about it. Hemingway was extraordinarily poor for his first few years and often went without food for lack of money. Oscar Wilde died here destitute and abandoned. Far more stories concerning the less famous have gone untold.

Jeremy was working as a crime reporter in Canada, writing a couple novels on the side until a book he wrote got him death threats from the person it was written about; a story on producing your own drugs which he did his own "research" for, landed him in trouble with the Canadian police. He packed up all his stuff, withdrew all his money from the bank and set out for Europe with dreams of North Africa. Never being very good with money, by the time he got to Paris to take a three-week course in French, his cash was gone and he had no place to stay.

Thomas was fleeing an equally bad situation at home, one that he was apprehensive to talk about, but had something to do with a father in jail, no money, no job, getting high, getting drunk, and friends who responded to his idea of going to Europe and then on to Egypt with the typical, "no way, you're never going to go anywhere with your life." He stole a car from a friend, drove it to the Kentucky Derby where he lost what little money he did have, sold the car for a plane ticket



Thomas

to Europe, was supposed to change buses in Paris, a place he never really wanted to go, always dreaming of places more exotic, but didn't have the money and was contemplating sleeping under a bridge until he wandered into Shakespeare and Company and ended up with a place to stay 10 minutes after walking through the door.

There is a sign on the second floor at Shakespeare and Company above one of the doors that reads, "Be not inhospitable to strangers lest they be angels in disguise." It's not just a nice sounding quote, it's what George Whitman and Shakespeare and Company are all about, an oasis of warmth and hospitality in an otherwise cold city.

Day fades into night.

A pale winter's sun, lingering on into spring, sets behind the left bank as I write this from the tip of l'île de la Cité. It is getting cold, not yet far enough towards summer where the sun goes down but it stays warm. Families with strollers will retire for the night and the young people come out with guitars and bottles of wine, singing something about merchant ships and atomic energy.

No.

It's not time for that yet and my hands that are writing this are turning pale and cold and white, so they're almost the same color as Paris limestone at dusk, a deepening grey with only the slightest hint of life.

And soon it will be dark and there will be nothing left to do but wander the banks of the Seine. Sick, tired, and worn out from life in a glorious city that could not care less about me, checking under bridges for my old friend Kevin.

Photos and Text: Jake Futernick



E ENGINE DOWN



For a long time I couldn't make up my mind as to how I felt about Engine Down. Although their first album for Lovitt Records reminded me of a Richmond, VA version of Kerosene 454 I really liked it a lot. Their second record didn't quite grab me as much as the band moved to more of a subdued, subtle approach in their off-kilter, unique song writing. I saw live them during this period, introduced myself and found them to be cordial southern gentlemen, but their music still failed to capture my complete attention. For a little while Engine Down fell off my radar but re-emerged when a *Law of Inertia* record reviewer gave their newest full-length, *Demure*, a glowing review. When the band played New York's Knitting Factory with Shiner, I eagerly attended (to tell the truth, more to see Shiner than Engine Down). After four skinny, bearded guys took the stage and launched into a rhythmic, grinding, cavalcade of sound that had every single person in the audience swaying their entire body with the beat of each snare drum I was hooked, lock, stock, and barrel.

Engine Down had nailed it, and I've been a sucker for this band ever since. I recently had a chance to sit down with singer/guitarist, Keely Dixon David, and chat about how a small band copes with the pressures of becoming bigger while still maintaining their edge and vitality. The South never sounded so good.

What would you be doing if you weren't playing music?

Probably sitting in a cubical doing graphic design. I do all the graphic design for Engine Down. I've done print and web, but I more prefer web design 'cause it's less people that I have to deal with when making something, but I like print design as well since I actually have something I can touch at the end of the process.

Here's something I'm wondering about today: how does a band like The Strokes, or Engine Down, go from writing their first record with no pressure, no need for success—just fun playing music—and then keep that same feeling as the band becomes more and more of an actual job? In other words, the more a band becomes part of your economic lifestyle, does it become harder to keep focus and keep the same quality of songs?

If you write one album that, depending on if it's well known or not, and depending

how much you tour on it, it becomes very important to you for a bunch of reasons. Among others, if you really promote that record by touring you start to rely on that record in some way to sell so you can pay your rent. If you're The Strokes they probably toured over a year without stopping touring on that one record. What's impressive to me is how some bands write new records while on the road. The Rolling Stones brought a full studio in a semi. If I had that, oh sure.... Engine Down gets bored of playing the same thing, we like to see what we can come up with that's new and pushes the envelope. In that way, we keep the music from seeming like work and we forget that implicitly there is some pressure for our records to be good and our band to work together as a unit. I mean, our pressure is nowhere near what I'm sure The Strokes will have to deal with when their next record hits the shelves, but still there's pressure for any underground band that makes their band a part of their life. We're pretty good at channeling that pressure into creativity to push ourselves to write new and different songs, but you're right it is something worth asking about.

How do you guys generally write music?

Each of our records have all been different. The latest record was basically me sitting in my room and coming up with a basic sketch of what the song would sound like and how it would be formulated. I would come up with the vocal melody and the guitar parts. Then I would work with Cornbread, our drummer, to find a good beat for each part. I really cannot fully visualize what a song will eventually be like until I nail down a drum part. Then we all get together and the song changes even more.

Do you prefer any different way or do you just take it as it comes?

Every way we've done it takes a long time. We are not quick writers and we are very meticulous: A lot of times we drop songs, we don't just write songs and then throw them all onto an album just to get the album out. If we're going to finish a song it has to be just so, so it takes quite a while. We've done the "jam" thing where someone has a riff and then we try to build while playing together.

How do you keep from getting burnt out?

It's been a while since I've written anything which is definitely a good thing... some people can write a song every day, that would kill me. For me, it's been playing in other bands to keep me from getting bored with one thing. I play in Denali, I play bass in that [see issue #11], and that helps out too—switching instruments entirely. I like to juggle bands and ideas and instruments. So then when I come back to Engine Down I have a refreshed attitude and I'm happy to be playing that style of music again. A lot of times my ideas just won't work with Engine Down so I bring them to another band.

Do you think that you would be overwhelmed by pressure if your livelihood depended entirely on how your records sold?

Gosh, like if we don't write a good record then I wouldn't be able to pay my rent next month? Man, I probably wouldn't be enjoying it. For instance, I have a day job that I work at when I'm not on the road. I like that job and I think if I didn't like it as much as I do I would hate it terribly and not want to do it anymore. That's how I feel about Engine Down. I just don't think of it as a job, I think of it as an art-summer camp that happens all over the country, most days of the year. It's something that's on my own terms. It has to be something that's driven by inspiration. Also, I refuse to deal with any of the money situations we have in the band. There are guys in the band who



are good at dealing with that, but I just can't to keep myself from feeling like money rules our band. So, when we have to pull out a contract to keep someone from stiffing us at a show, it's never me that does that.

So you stick to writing the songs?

Yes, or the artwork, or the T-shirts, or something else artistic.

What happens if in a few months Engine Down suddenly finds itself a huge money-maker. No band goes into a potentially successful situation thinking they might be fighting with their band mates over royalties or publishing rights or something, but a whole lot of bands do fight about that stuff. Look at the Dead Kennedys right now, or David Grohl and Courtney Love's fight over the last Nirvana singles.

I could definitely understand it. We live in Virginia, so our expenses are low—our cost of living is nowhere near what a guy who lives in a sweet pad in New York City with a huge drug addiction is going to need out of his band. That guy would not be able to subsist on the money we make from Engine Down. Therefore his music probably starts sucking because of the amazing pressure he's got on him to write music that allows him to keep his nice apartment and drug habit. I can understand that, that would be the biggest threat. I don't even have a girlfriend that I take out to dinner, much less a family to support.

You hear about bands that break up over money, at some point money wasn't an issue for them.

Oh no, that's why they're in bands in the first place as opposed to being some businessman or woman. A lot of people in bands have problems with authority; music is a lot of times just a release from that authority. At a certain point it's probably a good thing to have managers and agents and stuff because at the very least I, as the guitar player and singer, will be able to focus on the music and not, "is the record label paying us what they owe us this month?" I want to influence people, I want to inspire people, that's my only concern. I don't care about getting paid huge amounts of money. I want to make records that ten years from now people will be talking about Engine Down the way we talk about bands like Sunny Day Real Estate or Black Flag or something. I totally do. If I could make music that gave a chill on someone's neck or give someone the feeling that I got when I first got into music then that is fucking amazing. Radiohead does that to me today. The way they would break down everything and start over with something completely new and different. If things had gone a different way, which they easily could have, people might have totally overlooked Radiohead and kids like me never would have discovered them. But they're an interesting example because each one of their records keeps on getting more and more interesting and they are probably under enormous pressure when you think about it. A lot of people have probably invested a lot of capital in that band. So if suddenly they flop it hurts a lot of people. But, they've realized that they're given *carte blanche* to do whatever the hell they want at this point and the end result is brilliant, amazing music. When I get an e-mail from a kid who says he just wants to go home and write music after seeing us instead of watching the last two bands, well, that is totally amazing.

You know who used to do that to me? The two times I saw Dinosaur Jr. I used to feel that way.

Oh there you go, that was the first CD I ever bought—Dinosaur Jr.

The first CD I ever bought was *The Razor's Edge* by AC/DC. [laughter] Do you ever think, "well, we've sold a few thousand copies of this record, are we going to be the type of band that breaks up and suddenly we become posthumously huge?"

Sure, I wonder, but you don't want to be arrogant and think unrealistic things about where we stand. Everyone wonders how well their band will stand the test of time. Who knows?

Do you guys only try to do very unique stuff and never ever repeat yourself—even scrapping stuff that sounds old and tired?

Sure, we scrap riffs or melodies all the time if we think we've done them before or if they don't work as well as they could. But, we're also pretty good and putting ideas on hold rather than just tossing them out entirely.

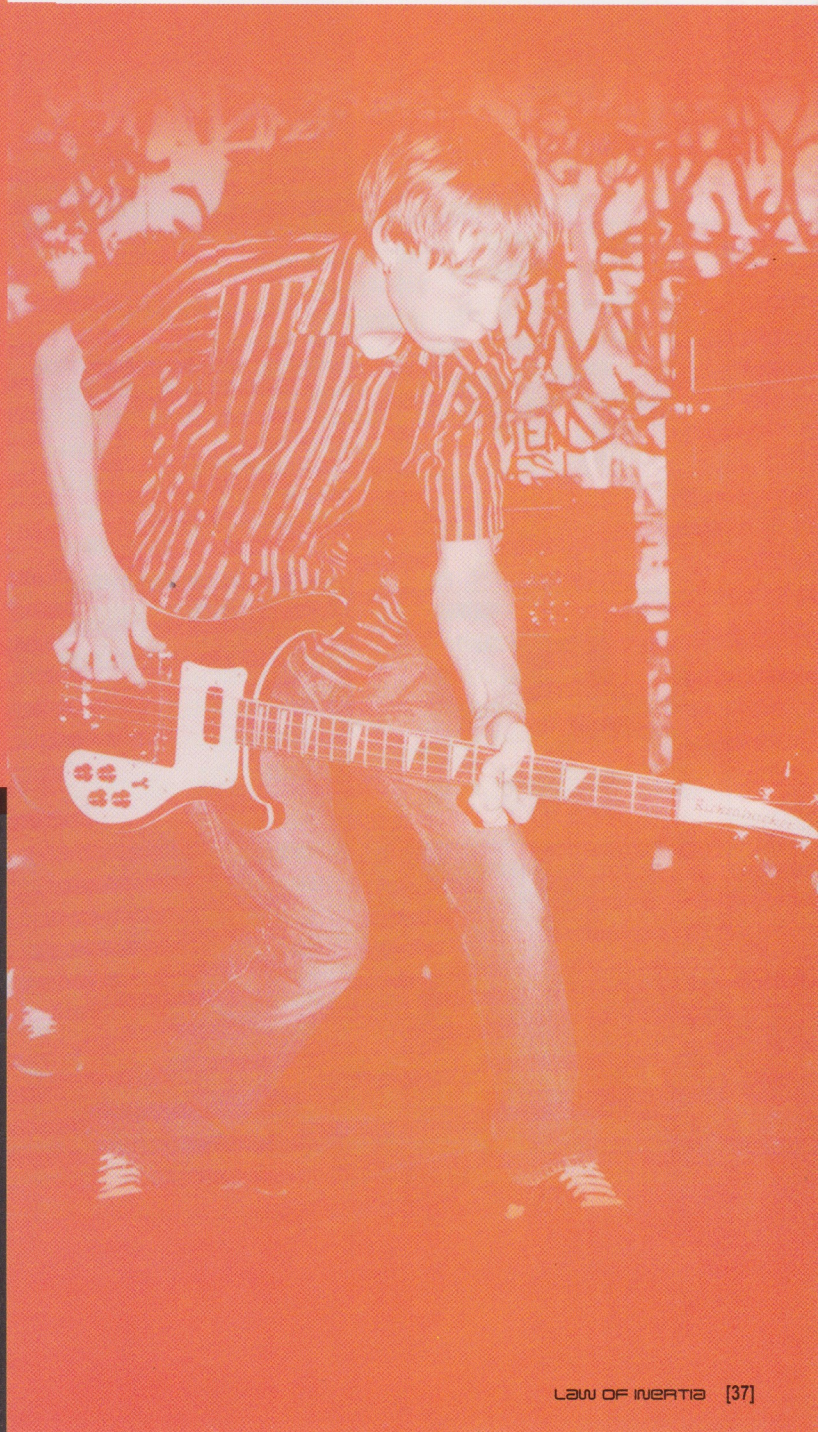
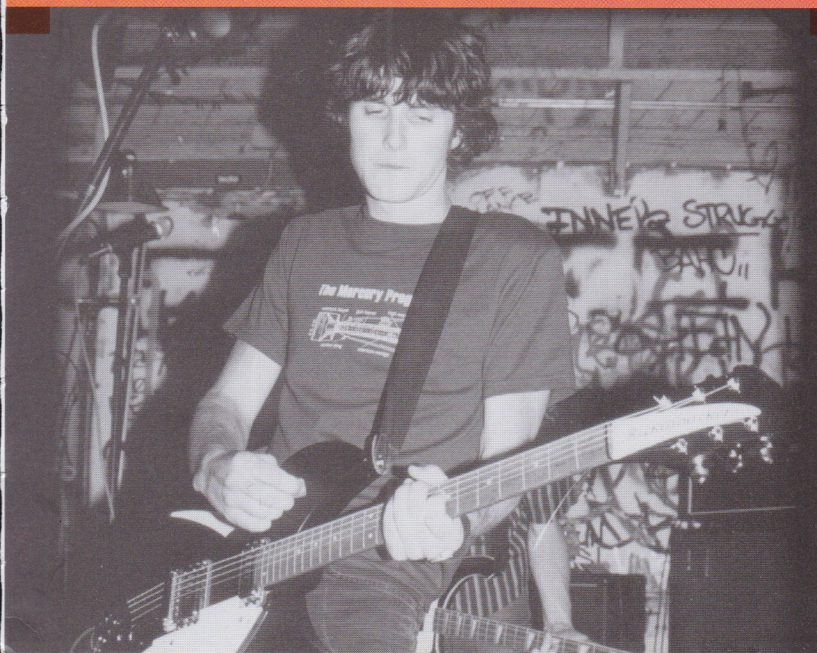
How did Cornbread get his name?

Well, Cornbread is an interesting guy. Everyone loves him, he's a ladies-man and a guy's-guy. He's just a good friend. At some point someone said, "okay, let's go pick up cornbread," and it was as simple as that, and the name stuck. Everyone knew who was being referred to as Cornbread and from there on in it stuck.

He doesn't like to eat cornbread or something?

Nope, he may, but there's no story like that or anything.

www.enginedown.com



Home Town Heroes

One brisk day, towards the end of 2002, Law of Inertia went to New York's fabulous Greenwich Village and asked a few people we met about the more pressing, poignant issues of the day. Among other topics covered were what music the kids are listening to these days, how the youth of New York City feels about US foreign policy, and exactly why a Rorschach diagram looks pretty much just like everyone's second favorite part of the female anatomy. The answers were not encouraging.

-Ross Siegel & Aaron Leikove



1



Name: Jessica

Age: 17

Favorite Record At This Moment: Radiohead's *Kid A*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "I think George Bush is an idiot for waging a war for no reason other than to look good in the eyes of Republicans."

Rorschach #1: "Black!"

Rorschach #2: "A face"

Rorschach #3: "Socks"



Name: Aaron

Age: 22

Favorite Record At This Moment: Black Sabbath's *The Mob Rules*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "Nuclear winter is right around the corner, baby!"

Rorschach #1: "Jigsaw Puzzle"

Rorschach #2: "Old Ladies"

Rorschach #3: "Aliens"



Name: Tara

Age: 29

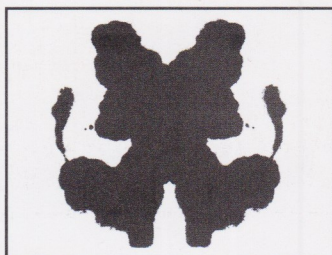
Favorite Record At This Moment: Reverend Horton Heat's *Greatest Hits*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "I think it's retarded!"

Rorschach #1: "Ribs"

Rorschach #2: "A little person"

Rorschach #3: "Lungs and a rib-cage and hips"



2



Name: Brennan

Age: 19

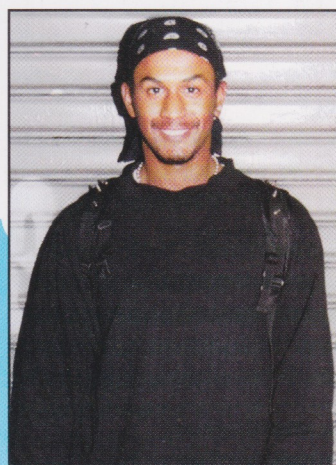
Favorite Record At This Moment: Turbo Negro's *Apocalypse Dudes*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "I think it sucks!"

Rorschach #1: "A leaf"

Rorschach #2: "A scary clown face"

Rorschach #3: "A bug"



Name: Carmelo

Age: 18

Favorite Record At This Moment: Tool's *Aenima*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "I think Iraq should bomb this country but they don't have the resources to do so."

Rorschach #1: "Crazy"

Rorschach #2: "Death"

Rorschach #3: "Dog"



Name: Anna

Age: 21

Favorite Record At This Moment: Misfits' *Static Age*

Feelings on War in Iraq: "I think it's pretty techno."

Rorschach #1: "Sex"

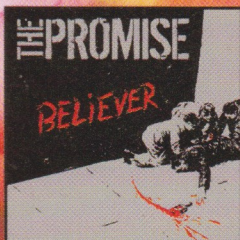
Rorschach #2: "Rapists"

Rorschach #3: "Violence"



3

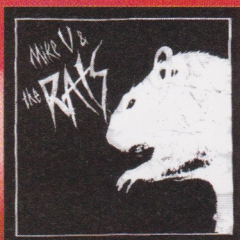
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THE PROMISE

"Believer" CD

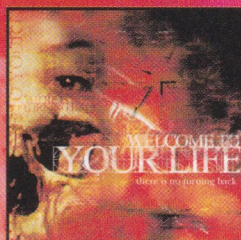
The debut release from the East Coast's premiere straight edge outfit. Uncompromised hardcore from former members of Another Victim, Conviction, Earth Crisis, One King Down, and Santa Sangre.



MIKE V. & THE RATS

"s/t" 7"/CDep

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WELCOME TO YOUR LIFE

"There Is No Turning Back" CD

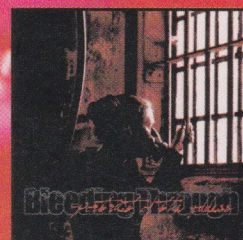
Blurring the line between hardcore and metal, the debut album from WTYL will have you guessing...are they from Orange County or Sweden? Melodic, and powerful from ex-members of Bleeding Through and Show of Hands.



STAY GOLD

"Pills and Advice" CD

The long anticipated full length from Seattle's hardcore heroes. Twelve tracks of heart-felt, angst laden hardcore.



BLEEDING THROUGH

"Portrait of the Goddess" CD

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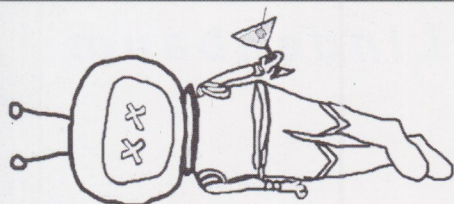
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MC Paul Barman

by Adam Lindenbaum

My first impression of MC Paul Barman came from none other than Ross Siegel. Literally. Ross and I would be walking around New York City, and he'd be rapping these ridiculously rhymed sentences: "My dandy voice makes the most anti-choice grannies panties moist" and "I'm the hypest lyricist while they're like what type of beer is this." I had to get some of this Paul Barman for myself. I have been spreading the gospel ever since. Although it is safe to say I am a rap neophyte, I also feel comfortable saying MC Paul Barman has increased rap's intellect factor tenfold. He does so with an educated, self-mocking, society-commentating, make-it-easier-to laugh-at yourself style that has dragged me across the rap appreciation line at the top of my lungs. Aside from Bob Dylan and Tom Waits, no lyrically focused music continues to draw so much of my attention.

When Ross entered my car at the start of a Jewish Holiday road trip with Paul Barman's new album, *Paulelujah!* I was ecstatic. Rolling up to our synagogue for Yom Kippur with "Cock Mobster" blasting on the radio will always hold a twisted place in my heart. I was honored when Ross deferred this interview to me. Knowing so little about rap, and interviewing for that matter, I was nervous when I sat down with Paul. Those feelings only intensified when he took away my carefully crafted questions and insisted we just have a conversation. In retrospect, I'm glad he did. Paul immediately loosened the mood because our conversation exposed his breadth of art, literature, and music appreciation he draws from to create his music. Even if you never listen to Barman's hilarity in spoken word, gangsta, talkin' blues and slow jam styles on "Paulelujah!" much of his worldliness, linguistic dexterity and sense of humor reared its head during our conversation.

Ever hear of *Law of Inertia*?

Yeah, I think I have heard of it.

Our roots are mostly in independent hard rock, but we've expanded our focus to cover all music we like.

[looking at issue #11] This is a huge production here, how do you manage?

We publish only around twice per year, so it's manageable on all of our part time schedules.

Who publishes it, some kid with a trust fund?

My friend Ross, who'll hopefully come by and take pictures later. Check out page 32. Good friends with Princess Superstar still?

Yeah, we're in touch.

"MTV Get Off the Air" was the song that Ross and I got to know your music.

Cool.

Any plans to do more work with Princess Superstar?

Nothing planned right now. Can I have this copy of your magazine?

Sure. So, congratulations on *Paulelujah*, it sounds great.

Thank you very much.

I'd like to talk about lyrics first.

You want this copy... this one here... here this one's yours. [hands over fully packaged CD]

Totally, I'd love one. I only have the promo.

No doubt. I'm so happy with the way this insert came out.

Lets start with art, since it's on the table. Literally. I'm a big fan of record collecting because of the artwork that went with them. Are you trying to bring back art in music packaging?

Adam, look. Something like this doesn't come from anything but inspiration. It occurred to me, with all the CD burning, there needs to be a reason to own something, so I gave it as much... I'm going to have to take these questions away from you ... If they were

good questions you'll remember [reaches over and takes my notepad]. Yeah, I thought this would give someone a reason to buy and not burn it. But, I don't benefit from people buying it. I would benefit more from people buying a T-shirt, which doesn't exist right now. I'm out of T-shirts.

Too bad, I'd buy one.

Yeah. When I bought the Master Ace record I was on, it was \$20. You better get something good for \$20. You can have your questions back now [gives back my notepad].

Thanks... I was floundering... understand I haven't interviewed since my college newspaper. And that was a whole lot more uptight to start with.

But, you've talked to people before, right. I urge interviewers to do this. I'm going to get some water... do you want some?

No thanks. [Comes back 20 seconds later] So, I noticed your website is up and running well. A lot of your artwork too.

Yeah, and www.cockmobster.com went up yesterday.

Traffic increase since you've updated it? Not the kind of thing you track? Alright, well, let's talk about your rhymes.

Okay.

I think a lot of them are brilliant, where do you come up with your most creative rhymes? Where do you feel most comfortable?

Can be any setting. I don't know. I guess the best response is with a joke [long silence without joke]. I guess when you're traveling on a train. Or at your friend's place.

Have you done much traveling?

I went to Jerusalem at the end of the summer and then the Swiss Art Expo.

I studied film at Hebrew University for three months.

Where?

On what is currently disputed territory in Western Jerusalem.

Do you speak Hebrew?

No, the program was too time intensive. The film class was like Mon-Wed. and I traveled the rest of the time. It was a good way to have a home base. Did you write much while you were in Israel?

How do you spell "Domb"? Is it with a B?

Like a Dome Stadium? Dome, with an E.

Yeah, that's what I thought.

Did any of the new record come from Israeli inspiration or the politics going on there?

I went to Israel like 6 months after I finished recording... the only thing I wrote there was "Yarmulke Bra," which isn't out yet.

I know your press has been positive, and for good reason. Has anyone criticized your music for being too complex? To the point of not being able to understand what you're talking about? Any groups feeling alienated?

Perhaps. Look, I don't know who has the right to talk about groups as if they know something. People think they know what the mainstream is. People think they know what a group is. People, I think, respond personally. So, no, I have not yet been criticized for being too complex... I think it's an ignorant criticism to make. Who would make that criticism? A real person? Would anyone you know say that?

There are some lyrics that I think are brilliant, but a good chunk of it goes over people's heads.

Did it go over your head?

A lot of it has, yeah. I have to sit with a Thesaurus and my DSL connection to figure out what's going on sometimes.

But that's not going over your head at all. Now you know what they are. I've done that with art many times. One would hope it's multilayered like The Simpsons and can be appreciated on different levels. That's only a good thing.

The reference I was thinking of was on "Excuse You" - When

you talk about "PEMDAS effects" and "SOHCAHTOA." Were you trying to mislead people into thinking about the early '90's rap group? Do you care if people get the high school math reference?

I did it live to people who have never heard it or read it in LA, and the mathematicians in the audience loved it. I am talking about both. Look how it's written. It's PEMDAS EFX. It functions in a few ways. I'm calling you corny and your toe can have a corn, and you would remedy it by soaking a toe.

Wow, I never thought of that.

But, it's not over your head, man. I don't have the most mellifluous Leonard Cohen style voice. So, there has to be something to pull you in and respond to the second, third, one-millionth listen.

Right, and I think that's the trademark of good music, being able to listen to it over again. In contrast to movies for instance. They often don't have the same qualities on the repeat play.

The problem with your question is it seems like you're talking about other people instead of yourself. Also, movies are always best in the theater. Until you have the private basement projector amped system.

Which is easy to get today, but hard on student loans.

Are you a student?

Yeah, law student.

Where?

St. John's... in Queens.

You live there, in Queens?

No, Manhattan.

Are you from NY?

Yes. Upstate.

Where?

Sullivan and Rockland County.

I don't know.

It's like halfway between here and Ithaca. I went to Cornell University.

Have you ever read *Fool on the Hill* by Matt Ruff?

Yeah, but only like the first 100 pages.

You didn't like it?

No, I did, but I was reading it while staying at my friend's house in San Francisco. I have to get a copy here.

I was listening to Idiot's Delight. Do you know who Vince Scelsa is?

Yes.

He was reading sections of it on his Saturday morning show, and my dad bought it, so I read his copy. There are some real magical impressions of Cornell on there.

Yes, the move-in day opening scene is accurate.

They must be psyched that he set a novel there.

Totally, but I suppose Vonnegut is Cornell's literary champion.

The reason I'm defensive... I feel when you talk about other groups, as a group. I think it's so invalid man. Always in an underestimated context.

Yes, but it's undeniably what our society likes to do. Section the record stores so neatly and the neighborhoods around.

One guy I talked to recently said my reference to Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Noam Chomsky was "suburban." What is a truly "suburban" reference I don't know. Something from the *Suburban Voice* newspaper? But even that isn't truly suburban.

She spoke at my school yesterday.

No way! [emphatically] What did she speak about?

Basically about the procedure of how the Supreme Court operates. The most interesting thing I thought she said was that despite all the press the dissention among the justices gets, 46% of their decisions are unanimous. Shows the court is working well, but we only highlight the bitter divide.

That might be scary too. I don't know. I would like to think someone is in extreme disagreement up there.

Yes... and there have been some bitter opinions written. But, it's good to know the barriers are ideological and not personal or driven by political party. I want to talk about your beats now. I think they're varied, but not all that complex or overbearing. Meaning, no one is going to ride up to a party with your music playing with a kicker. How do you structure your beats to emphasize your rhyming?

I pick the ones I like the best. Sometimes I.... [silence] Uh, what was the question?

In relation to your rhyming, which I am assuming is your focus, where and how do the beats you create fit in? Do they come first, after you finish writing?

Well, I don't create the beats. They're made by the producers. Sometimes I work with them on it.

Is that something you want to take more interest in?

Of course. Not entirely my responsibility...

"Bleeding Brain Grow" reeked of your style.

That producer picked that beat well for me. He didn't sample the show's song. Did it sound like he does?

Yeah, I thought so.

No, I sang it that way, but the beat was something different.

Ok, my bad.

The beat I loved, and I was kind of saving the chorus. Do you want to smoke some of my pot? Would that interest you?

Yeah, cool.

How's law [school] going?

It's going well. I'm in my last year.

You know one of my DJ's just passed the bar. He wants to be the first DJ with a JD.

That's cool. Have you heard of DJ Salinger? Brilliant, no?

DJ Salinger? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Unless Salinger was backwards.

I can't do that in my head.

It's DJ Regnilas. If you saw it as an anagram, it would be DJ LA's Reign. Tell me more about your law work. What kind do you want to do?

Labor and employment, I think. I worked for the public sector union a couple of summers ago, and that was cool. These guys got no respect when I worked for them, and now, well, they're NY's bravest rock star heroes since 9/11. But, I'm jobless still.

But, you're a full time student?

Yeah. My last year. I have to start looking now.

What do you think will happen?

I don't know. I could get something tomorrow and be set, or just go into the bar without a job and take a vacation when I'm through and look after that.

My CD case should have been white on white, man. The plastic looks all weird. Maybe it was supposed to be a color... maybe green. Look, I'm just happy this newspaper insert exists.

It's going in with all your CDs?

Yeah, I'm glad everything isn't covered with plastic. It's such a waste.

Environmentally?

Yes. This could have been shrink-wrapped. Oh, there's no UPC symbol. They wouldn't do it right on the cardboard, would they?

I don't know what they're thinking. Maybe put a sticker on the shrink-wrap? I like the newspaper insert, it's creative packaging. I love that Rolling Stones *Sticky Fingers* Album, with the zipper. That's so creative. CD's are lacking that.

They're too small!

Well, they had the long boxes for a while.

Do you know why that is? The only reason for that was so it would fit in people's old record display cases. A CD is 5 inches, and the holders were a lot deeper, and you'd never be able to

browse them. So they created these big long boxes, which is a disgraceful waste of paper, and REM started a petition to get rid of it.

Talk about a lack of foresight.

How do you fold this damn thing [the newspaper insert]?

I don't know, I've never folded a map well. [Long struggle to fold it] Maybe it'll go right up on people's wall. There, problem solved.

Are you going to take the bar in more than one state?

Most of my family's here. So, I'll probably only go to another state if I do some pro bono work out in the southwest or something. Something with Native Americans.

Holy Cow. You'll have to get a second job to support your charitable nature.

I think you can defer your loans, but I'm not on top of the situation yet.

Good luck, that sounds awesome. Have you been anywhere besides Israel or the States?

Mexico...my grandparents would park their motor home along the beach.

The beach in Mexico?

Not your typical Jewish grandparents living in a retirement community, right?

What do your parents do?

You're a good interviewer.

Well I'm just trying to see how radical the jump from beach bum to law student is. If they had become lawyers, it would be more of a shocking transition. Yours is not quite so shocking, being that you were brought up in the suburbs, right?

Yes, I suppose.

Well, a lawyer with the power of good! Torn between city and country! Have you heard the Jonathan Richman song, "I Love the City But I Love the Country Too"?

No, I only have heard a few songs. But, my friend in San Francisco jams with him sometimes.

I'm sure you'd love him. Get the album— I think it's with a dog on the cover. But, my friend from upstate New York said that song is exactly how he feels. Also, check out *The New Settler Interview*— it's from Humboldt County, north of San Francisco. The last interview I read had a lot of Native American ritual in there. There's this article about this peace pipe. I can't think of what it's called...I want to say Chalupa.

The Taco Bell thing?

And then there's the Ketubah.

The Jewish mysticism marriage license.

So there's the Chalupa, Ketubah, and this other thing that sounds like that.

Don't forget the Catawba.

What's that?

A grape indigenous to upstate New York.

You know what I also like to say...I buy borekas for boricuas in bodegas. Do those sound alike?

Totally.

By the way, you should print this interview about yourself...it's really interesting. I think your life is interesting. My advice is when you're editing it, don't think, "Shit, I don't have enough Paul Barman material."

Cool, thank you.

So, Catawba ... Ugh, it's not coming out long enough [Frustration with pen tip].

That's what she said.

Word. I got it now, thanks.

Have you spent much time in San Fran?

Yeah, half the record was recorded there. The last track, where I'm talking about San Francisco, was done in one take. It was all true. Do you know the one I'm talking about?

Yes, the one with the poop on the shoulder... I'm sorry I forgot the name.

You got it: "A Somewhat New Medium." The last time I was in San Francisco I went looking for the same marquee. They have different quotes. Last time it was, "Summer is the time when parents realize the value of teachers."

What street is it on?

I don't know.

I was there at the beginning of the summer; I would have loved to see it. Next time you're out, check out my friend who plays with Jonathan Richman... his stage name is Minnesota Slim, the whole play on Minnesota Fats... he's 6'6" and a twig too. You know what I was shocked to hear on the new album was, "Talkin' Time Travelin'."

You like the talkin' blues? That's what I've got right here.

It was just so cool. [Shows Woody Guthrie album] Nice! I thought you had the *Freewheelin* album kind of sound.

I wish! Thank you very much for saying that.

Are you a big Dylan fan?

He's my favorite right now. I just recorded a lot more stuff like that. I might not have brought it. I only have one Woody Guthrie CD. Do you have any?

I have one. *I Ain't Got No Home* but I'm not sure if that's the album.

I think there are no records, only one compilation after another. You know, I'm bringing a guitarist on tour with me.

That's incredible.

I have to have one. I can't do the MC format totally. It feels good. That one track, I was joking that I was right across from the guitar player. He kind of did to me what I did to you. I had my lyrics in front of me, and he was like, "Paul... to make this work..." and took the lyrics out of my hand. To make this work, you'll have to look at me, give me gestures, and feel what the music is all about. So, when I got into the role of the guitar, it came out so... I was so happy about it.

Do you play music?

I need to learn guitar.

But, you began to feel the collaboration, the give and take with the guitarist. You made music together.

His name is Etienne Durocher. He plays in San Francisco all the time.

I spent yesterday's shower and a Q46 bus ride coming up with some Barman type rhyme, just to see if I could.

Great, let's hear it.

No, would you do me the honor?

I'll read it to myself.

[Reads]

Subverting the congress

Stripped like a prom dress

George Bush can take some bong hits and

Go clean up my dong's mess

Before he creates turmoil on Arab soil over oil

To make millions for Leon Hess

Very nice work.

You dig it?

Yes, will you sign it for me? Put your email on it too. That was the perfect capper to this interview.

Well, thanks. I thought it had Barman politics and Barman sex jokes.

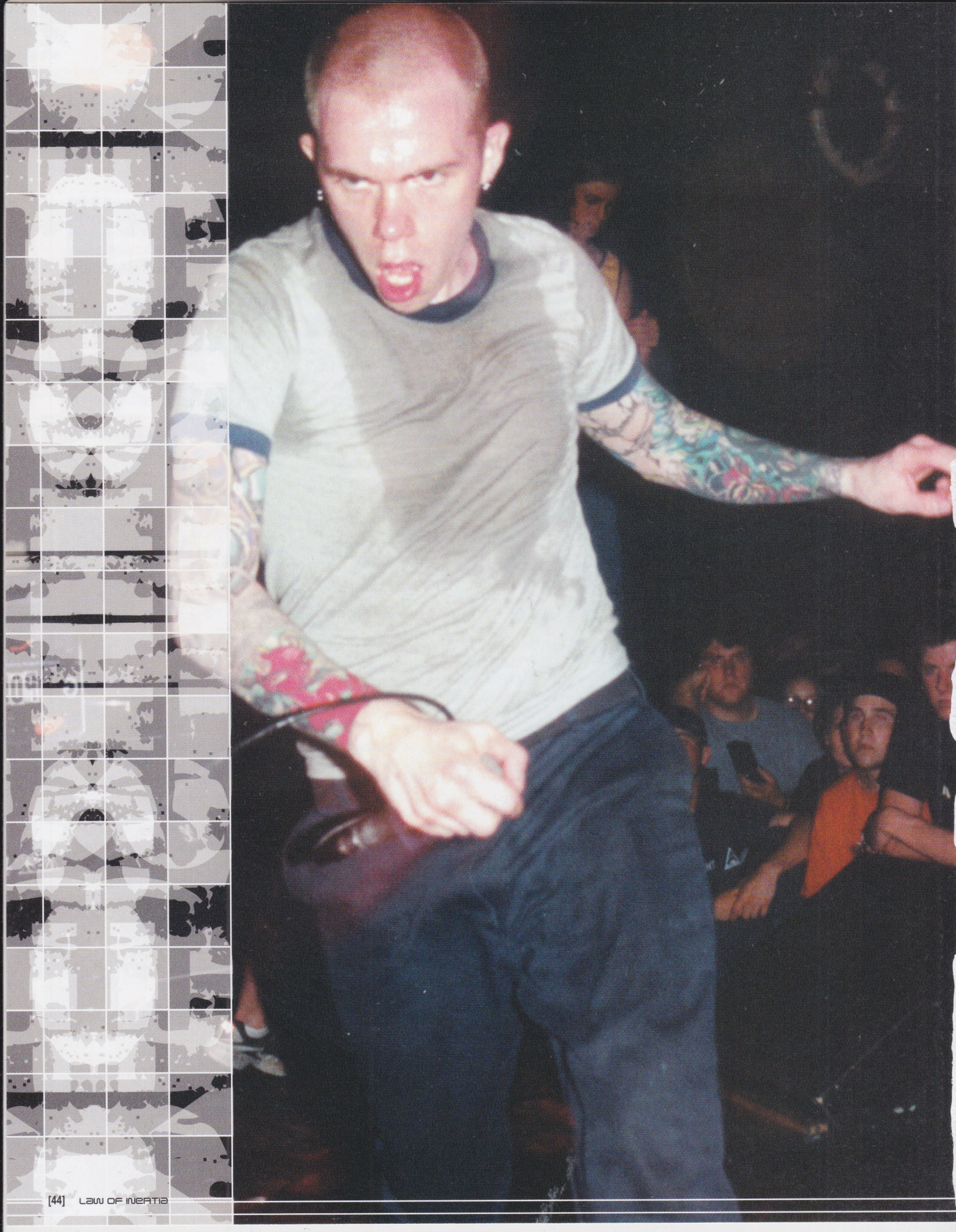
Make it your own!

When are you going to play in New York
Halloween at Makor, as part of CMJ 2002

Are you splitting the bill?

Yeah, with a rock band called Whirlwind Heat. I'm going to play Maxwell's in Hoboken too.

www.cockmobster.com



CONVERGE

BY ROSS SIEGEL

Rather than rely on covention and cliches in their relentless, brutally chaotic metalcore, Converge is a truly unique entity in everything from their musical compositions to the way they choose to offer their band to the world in the form of T-shirts, artwork, and promotional items. Having existed for over 13 years in the Boston area, Converge has grown from a small hardcore band into one of the most respected and loved aggressive rock outfits in the nation. With each release they push the boundaries of how loud, fast, and noisy a guitar/bass/drums combo can go, and every release shows them pushing the envelope just a bit further. Some bands are like a bat to the head; Converge is like a machine-gun riddling your chest with bullets.

Their singer, Jake Bannon, is just as interesting as the band for which he serves as mouthpiece. Whether he likes it or not, Jake has managed to position himself as an educated, outspoken voice in the so called "intelligent metal" movement. His voice is unlike any found in the hardcore/metal world. While many singers try to sing melodically or growl in a deep brooding voice, Jake bucks the trend and sings in a shrill, piercing screech that is as disconcerting as it is frightening. He doesn't try to be anything he's not and he doesn't claim to be anything more than he is.

While Mr. Bannon has developed a reputation of being a jerk, I disagree and see him instead as a focused, highly intelligent and individualistic person who simply knows what he likes out of music and life. I have never seen anything less than perfect from this man who is also known as one of the most mind-blowing graphic artists ever to grace a CD insert. If you like the cover of this magazine, well... you can thank Jake as he is responsible for its beauty.

I recently had a chance to sit down with Jake and pick his brain a bit. You will see that he is opinionated and unpretentious. And he expects others to be the same. Some people would consider this arrogant. Again, I disagree. I think it's about time.

How old are you?

I am 26 years old.

Jake, I think you're starting to develop this persona of almost a father-figure in the hardcore scene which is weird because you're only 26.

I don't really see myself as that. I see myself as a hardcore kid. I'm a career hardcore kid by some people's standards because I've been doing it for a good portion of my life, almost half my life. That's really scary when you think of it. I started writing songs for this band when I was 13, so that's half my life right there. Again, it's gone through its levels of seriousness in my life and obviously it's grown in stature since I was a teenager, but I don't see myself as any sort of authority figure. My opinion counts just as much as the next person who has something interesting and relevant to say.

Does it bother you that 15 year old kids who are just starting to get into punk rock might look at you as an older guy, as someone who's been around the block before?

I think to them I have. When you think about how much they've

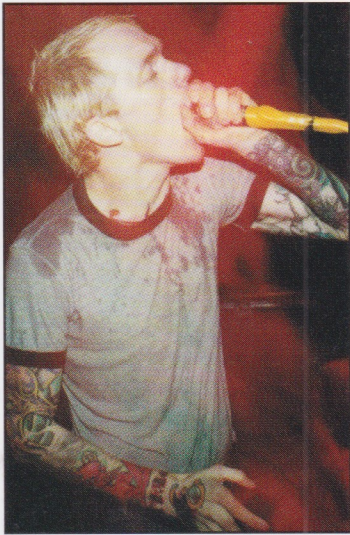
lived before then I have been around the block. I don't really think about it that way. I think about it as someone who's done a lot of stuff and had a lot of life experiences and that very well may be an unbelievable, surreal daydream to some people.

But, when a 15 year old kid is staring at you up on stage he probably looks to you like a spokesperson to some extent.

Okay, but we're in a community that's based solely on individual expression. The reason why I got into it and the reason why I decided not to listen to Iron Maiden and Motorhead and Accept anymore when I was a kid and to get into punk rock is because it seemed accessible. When I went to my first punk rock shows, the people I would see on stage looked just like me, there was no difference. The commitment they had was astounding to me, and the fact that the crowd also looked just like me was astounding. For the first time I found some grand unification in music. So with that I never really saw hero figures in hardcore and punk rock, I found some kind of peers. I would definitely find some people I would look up to and try to emulate but I tried not to look at them as heroes, per se. I looked at them as peers. I think punk rock is the antithesis of that. There should be no rock stars. There should be no fans who worship them.

I agree, the line between rocker and rocked should be non-existent.

Unfortunately, in punk and hardcore that line has been made a bit more rigid over the past decade. There's a variety of factors that have to do with that. With every band that tries to establish themselves and make it past who they are already and make it big, well, those are the mistakes they're making—they're selling themselves short. I'll leave it with this. There was an unnamed band that we played with a bunch of times. We were out doing some shows about six or seven months ago and we played with them a few times. The singer of this unnamed band comes up to me and says, "hey Jake, nice to see you!" It seemed really funny, you get that all the time. "Oh yeah, nice to see you, how are things going for you?" He's like, "Jake, things are great, our sound scans are going up, we're getting all these great tour offers and stuff." I looked at him and went, "whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You gotta slow down man." He started talking about going out on tour with us and "breaking into our market" as he called it. I just had to stop him and say, "dude, are you still a punk kid? You're talking about demographics and markets and it sounds like I should have pie-charts in front of me with a laser pointer." This is not what it's about. It's totally phony. These are the same people that were selling 20 or 30,000 records before and back then they were caring, genuine, great hardcore kids. Now they were coming up to me probably selling half what they were and they were on the way out. Their sincerity was waning and kids started to pick up on that and lost interest because of it. Reason being: they became a career band. When your band becomes a career band and ceases creating art for art's sake then they give up all the life-experience and sacrifice that makes them. When you trade your art for a steady paycheck then it sucks the life right out of you. I have never seen it work, I have never seen a band become completely comfortable economically and create the same quality of music they did before their good fortune, because they start relying on



their band for more than just expression, and that is dangerous. From the Rolling Stones to Black Sabbath to whoever is in the top ten or twenty in the radio, it's the same thing.

That may be why they say that most musicians make their most vital music in their 20's. If they make it to their 30's and they're still musicians then they're probably leading a pretty cushy life by then.

Well it depends. It depends what you're doing. There are definitely artists that I listen to that are well into their 30's who are playing some of the more relevant music out today.

Like Fugazi, they just made the best record of their career and those guys are pushing 40.

Yeah, so I don't know about your statement. There's a point in your career—I hate that word when referring to music, let's call it a tenure—there's a point in your tenure as a musician where you have to make a decision. Do you try to cash in and cash out? Or do you see that there's a glass ceiling in your community and you want to flourish as an artist. You see that you're in a community and you can do whatever you want in your community. You see that you have a few things to say and you have to make a choice to go ahead and say it, or do what is the marketable thing. Personally, I go with the option to be career artist and actually do relevant things.

I don't know which band you were referring to before, but I imagine their sound was a bit more marketable than yours.

Well, they were a band that was slowly metamorphasizing themselves. Sure, they may have been getting more marketable, thus losing anything important that they might have once had to say, but we outsold them triple that year. They became irrelevant. People aren't looking for Nu Metal hooks and trendy little what-have-you's. People want substance and artists want to deliver substance. I see myself as an artist not an entertainer. And the differences are obvious. I never want to be a fucking entertainer. Clowns and are entertainers and entertainers are clowns.

That's interesting. I don't think many people would make that distinction. Are there any artists you think have made a stylistic jump that may be true to themselves that you're interested in. I know you were at one time a big Metallica fan.

Well I used to be really into *Ride the Lightning*—that used to be my jam. Their new stuff sounds nothing like that album. I respect them for their new stuff; they're probably selling less copies and playing less hooky music now than at their peak around ten years ago. It's not anything I'm interested in patronizing, but they seem to be keeping true to themselves. There's still musicians who have been around for ten or more years who are still playing very interesting aggressive rock and roll. Entombed are still doing ungodly things. I was just hanging

out in Europe with Tomas who used to sing for At the Gates and he's still doing lots of relevant things in Sweden. It's pretty awesome to see people who are aging and love what they do and with every year passing they're getting more and more in tune with themselves as artists. There's great artists here too. Tonie Joy, at this point in his life, is just as relevant as he was in Universal Order of Armageddon. It's not the same thing. It might not be in the spotlight of his community and he's an amazing talent.

On a different note, it seemed when Converge was starting to get big in the mid-'90's, there was a resurgence in the tough-guy thing with everyone wearing basketball jerseys and bandanas and kick-boxing. We're not going to name names but there are certain segments of the hardcore community that are still very tough-guy dominated.

Well, hardcore, metal, and punk rock are violent, abrasive, loud forms of music.

Which draws tough-guys.

Well, not even draws it. It's an aggressive form of culture and it's going to attract aggressive people. Punk rock is safe these days but it's traditionally a very, very violent artform. In the late '70's punk rock was amazingly dangerous.

When Suicidal Tendencies played in the early '80's their shows were notoriously violent.

Hell, when Suicidal Tendencies played in the early '90's.... When I first saw them in 1991 or so—

I saw them with Queensryche.

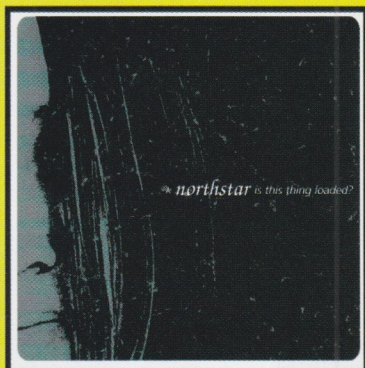
I saw them around that time with Exodus and Pantera and it was one of the most violent spectacles I've ever witnessed. Hardcore has always been violent and so has punk rock, and metal has always been ignorant, and ignorance breeds violence. In the early '90's in hardcore you had sort of an evolution of the scene. You had Kent McClard really put *HeartAttack* out for the first time and put No Answers to sleep, you got some free thinking individuals that were doing some relevant things at the time. Granted some of the spin-offs and some of that counter-culture got a little too out of control, and lost sight of its initial direction. A lot of the tough-guy stuff was in a direct retaliation to that.

It seems that Converge has really tried to distance yourselves from that in how you present yourselves to the world in terms of how your music sounds, how your records and T-shirts look, what you say, etc. Is my perception wrong?

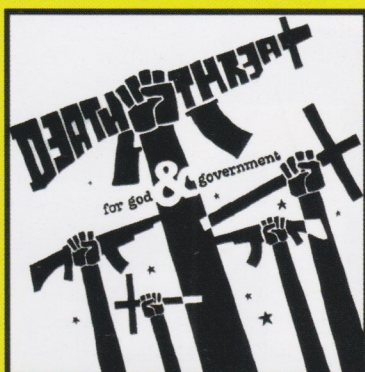
Not necessarily wrong. I think the important thing is that in a scene like we're in, in Boston, which is an amazingly diverse scene and we're an amazingly diverse band, we've progressed as our own entity where do our own thing and we've presented ourselves as such. We're not into clichés. Through our past releases in our past couple of years we haven't grown above that tough-guy scene, we've just grown along side of it.

www.convergecult.com

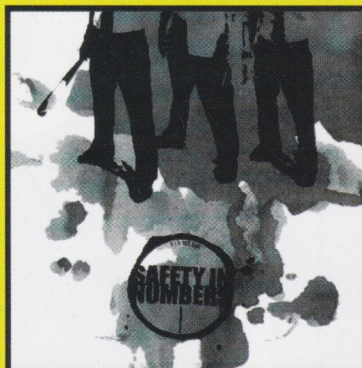
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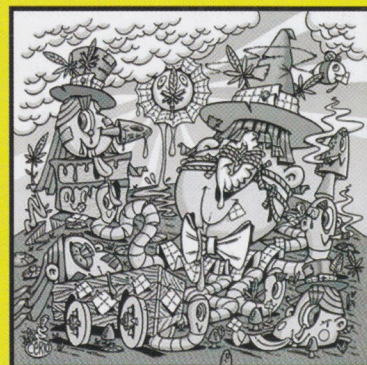
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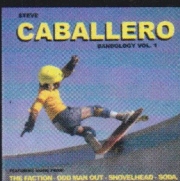
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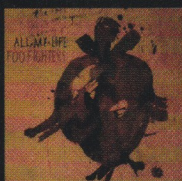
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BSF

WORDS BY REBECCA SWANNER

PHOTOS BY ROSS SIEGEL

I was hooked from the start. Boy Sets Fire opened for Sick of it All with the title track from their seminal *After the Eulogy* record fueling the power in the air with such an intensity that the pit tripled in size. For the next two days I had the lyrics, "where's your anger, where's your fucking rage?" stuck in my head.

Between songs, Nathan Gray, the band's mouthpiece, is known for preaching about injustice, activism, and how our government is failing us. Despite the poignancy of his message, most kids would rather dance than listen to what's wrong with the Patriot Act. But Nathan has a point. Hardcore isn't just about the music, it's also about the message. During BSF's tour with Snapcase I talked with Nathan about communism, country music, and the politics he preaches about onstage.

What did you listen to growing up? Were the Dead Kennedys a big influence?

Yeah, they were on all of us. Growing up it wasn't that though because *Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death* came out when I was in high school. Point being, I grew up on a lot of my parents records which were like Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, or musicals like *West Side Story* and stuff like that. I get a lot of jokes about that but I like musicals a lot. That and country music. I'm an all around fan: Merle Haggard, David Allan Coe, George Jones, Hank Williams, Johnny Cash.

Do you like Hank Williams III?

I do. I got his autograph actually. He plays bass for Superjoint Ritual, Phil from Pantera's new band. He looks exactly to a T like his grandfather, but in punk clothes. When he walked downstairs it was like, "Oh my God are you fucking kidding me? It's Hank Williams. What the fuck is going on?"

To change the subject a bit, was there anything else you ever wanted to do before Boy Sets Fire?

Nope!

Ever since you were five?

Ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to be in a band. I was a complete loser all my life because that was it. I really can't think of anything else I'd rather do than play music—ever. When I was young it was like Michael Jackson and Rick Springfield. I wouldn't have remotely known what hardcore was, except related music like Devo.

The first album I was into was Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

Right on. I had *Off the Wall*.

Not as your first album?

The first album that I actually purchased. It was that and this band called Servant which was a Christian band. My dad's a pastor so I grew up around all that.

You seem pretty comfortable speaking in front of an audience....

Oh yeah! Most of the moves on stage and the whole speaking thing—directly from church. A lot of my moves came from a pastor at a church in Pensacola, Florida that we used to go to. Seriously, I stole almost all his moves like the one-footed hop.

What are the major themes on the new album? I know on *Live for Today* there's the 9/11 song.

There's two songs dealing with that. "Release the Dogs" dealing more with what happened domestically with laws being enacted like the Patriot Act where it's seemed that people in power like George Bush and Tom Ridge took advantage of the situation for their own good, which is just a nasty, disgusting thing to do in light of such a tragedy.

They used it to push their drug campaign.

And now they use it to ignore any domestic issues. Everything is now...

Iraq.

Iraq or Afghanistan or whatever they find to do overseas as long as they're not taking care of education or the poor or anything. We have another song called "Foundation to Burn" that deals with relatively the same thing but in light of how unshocking the events of 9/11 were. It seems that no matter what country you live in the governments start fights and a bunch of innocent people get fucking hurt. We had nothing to do with it as far as the innocent people that died in those buildings. It's like when you go overseas, the Iraqi people have nothing to do with a lot of the stuff that is going on but we still drop bombs on them. Our government has been doing so much over there to piss people off that it's not necessarily surprising that it happened.

What other themes are on the album?

There's a song called "Management vs. Labor" that deals with class issues and people who are taken advantage of by their bosses and corporations. There's a song called "White Wedding Dress" that's about how when a woman is being abused no one pays attention until she fucks the guy up. I guess as controversial as it is, the whole song is about supporting that kind of thing. If someone is being beaten down and beaten down and no one's helping and she ends up taking the law in her own hands and ending the motherfucker—oh well!

What do you think about the war on Iraq that we're going into?

The funny thing is that Bush just put 344 billion fucking dollars into the military to start Star Wars up again. It's insane. Fortunately he's losing support as

he goes because he's acting like an idiot. Some of the things he's done in the name of [America] drive me insane. When I was a younger punk kid I did all the sloganeering—I hate this country blah blah blah. But the thing is, I don't want to. I want to take pride in my country. Because that is cool that a group of people can make this happen. I do appreciate the freedoms that we have which is why it pisses me off so much when things like the Patriot Act takes away those freedoms in the name of safety, which you can't promise. I can walk out the door and get hit by a car.

Do you think any politicians are doing it right?

I think that politicians overseas who are using extreme caution in what they're doing is great. I also admire people in this country, like Barbara Lee, who stood up and said we don't want to become what we hate. She was called a traitor and unpatriotic and un-American. Last time I checked, being a minority going up against corruption because you want to protect your country is totally patriotic and totally American. That's what you're supposed to do. Not just going "Ok. I'll do whatever. Let's bomb the shit out of some people because they're brown." But I've also seen a number of people who are against the war. I was in Orlando and a guy showed up (*showing me an ID pass from the WTC*). He worked there and was off that day. He came up after the show and had the same ideas that I had. It reminds me of Mark Twain's *War Prayer* where the pastor is praying that God helps them destroy the enemy, but if you believe in God that makes no damn sense whatsoever. If human beings are God's creatures, he doesn't have a side. There aren't good guys and bad guys.

Was there a reason you became so politically adamant?

My Dad, although he was more conservative taught me to think for myself. Although, he's gotten a lot more liberal.

My Dad came out as a Democrat last week.

Oh God, my Dad will never do that. It doesn't matter how crazy liberal he gets, rest assure he's stubborn enough to stay Republican. But it's fun because we have totally opposite opinions a lot of the time and we bounce them off each other. That started when I came into some ideas and my Dad supported me even though he didn't agree. I got into reading Abbie Hoffman which helped changed my viewpoint. I was like, holy shit, there's this whole other revolutionary culture [out there]. Then my Dad would get calls from school about what I was doing. I remember one time I wrote a paper. It was supposed to be a persuasive paper on anything and I picked flag burning. My teacher thought I was going to be anti. I wrote that whether or not I would personally do it I think people should have a right to do whatever they want in this country. And she lost her mind. Sent me off to the office. Wouldn't grade the paper. They called my Dad and he was like, "What do you want to me to do? Beat him? I can talk to him when he gets home, but you're going to have to take the paper and grade it and grade it on its merits, not on your particular politics." They had an argument for two hours before she took it and I got like a C or something. I think I only got a C because she was pissed.

Regarding the sniper that was just caught, I wanted to ask what your position on gun control is?

I'm not a big gun control activist. I do believe there are steps that need to be taken to make things

more safe, but I get really upset with the majority on the left who are totally fine with getting rid of all guns. I think that's scary. You have the right wing who say it's to form our own militia if we need to stand up to our government if they come against us. The left doesn't have a good argument against that because they're like, "that's what the National Guard is for." The National Guard shoots people! Kent State for Chrissakes! A lot of times with some of the right, and I hate it, I agree in this area, because the left always dismisses it saying it's conspiracy theories and all this shit. Yeah, tell that to MOVE who were bombed, tell people in the Ruby Ridge about black helicopters not existing. I don't trust the government at all and I don't trust people who say we don't need guns. I hate sounding like I have some weird wacky conspiracy theory and I hate feeling that there is a need for something that causes that much destruction but I really do. It sucks because there is a good argument for not having a gun in the house because you're more likely to shoot your kid then you are to shoot a burglar coming in.

Are you teaching your eight-year old to develop his own ideas?

I'm trying as much as possible. It's such a hard job and I know what my dad went through now. You want to control everything. My psychology teacher in high school taught us that kids will say things they don't really mean and if you ask, "What exactly did you mean by that?" then they explain it to you. He told us how once they were at the table and his son was like, "I really hate black people" and he was like "OH MY GOD!" and he had to try his hardest to be like, "What do you mean by that?" It turns out he just meant bad people which he associated with the color black, not African-American people. He was like, "Oh, ok, if you could say that differently that'd be great."

Will you explain your communist beliefs?

Me and Josh are both members of the Communist party in the U.S. Not highly organized with them. We got involved so we could be involved with people who are sort of like-minded. I just find it really gross right now within the left how divided everyone is. I just think the left needs to come together and create something new. Something that doesn't have the old stigmas associated with it. People are starving and dying and we have a president who wasn't elected. While that's going on, we're too busy fighting with each other about what color star should we put on our shirt. That's why I've really learned to appreciate the ACLU. The Patriot Act and stuff like that which no one wanted to go up against because they were scared they were going to be called un-American. The ACLU was like "Fuck it, everyone hates us anyway. [pointing finger] That's wrong!"

Nadine Strossen is a very cool woman.

I'm reading a book right now by Nadine Strossen called *Defending Pornography*, which is a fucking awesome book. Also recently I was reading a book by Jim Goad called the *Redneck Manifesto* and if you can get past going "oh my god this guy's an asshole!" it's an amazing book on race and class and how racism isn't the problem in this country, class is.

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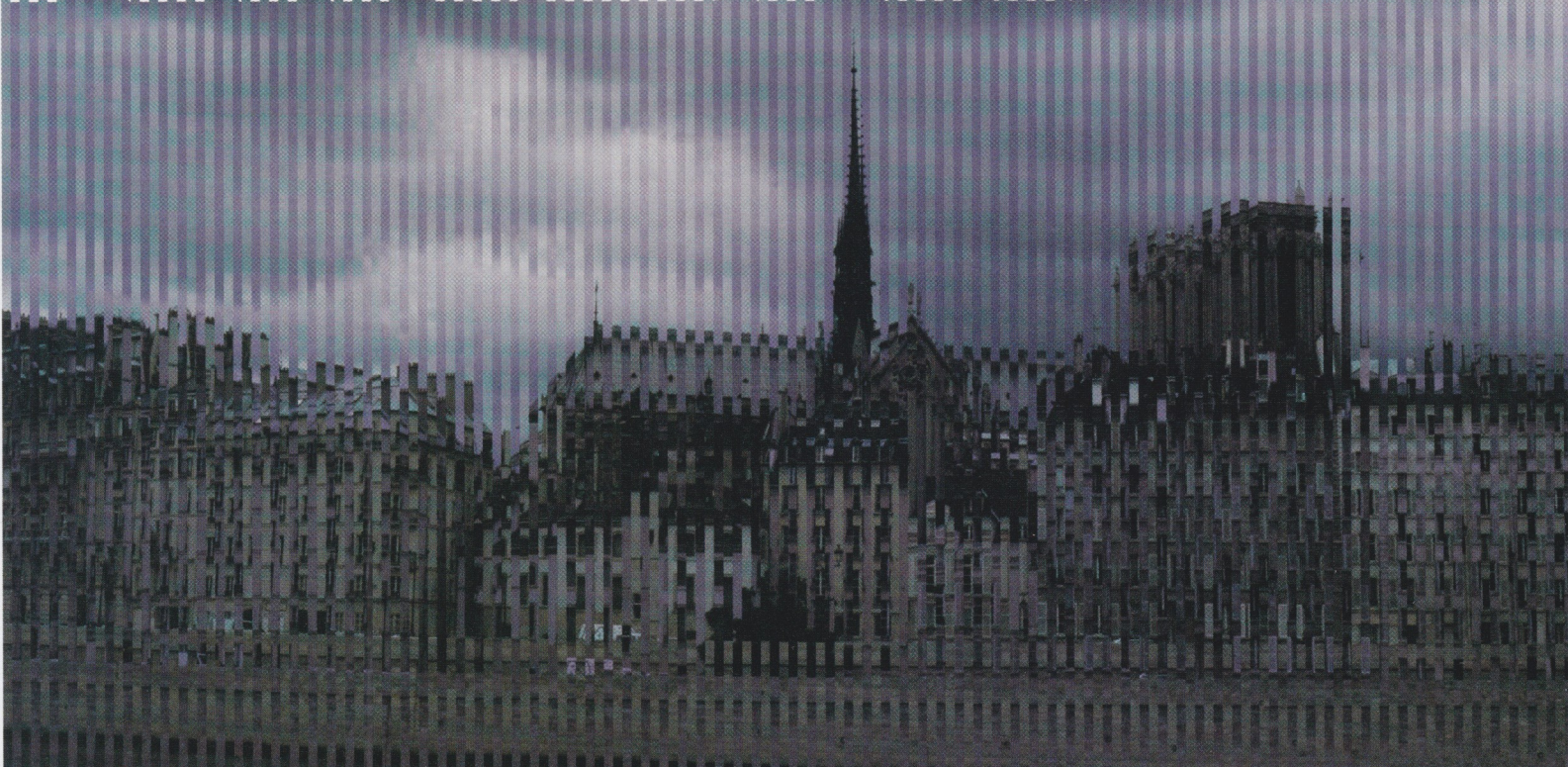
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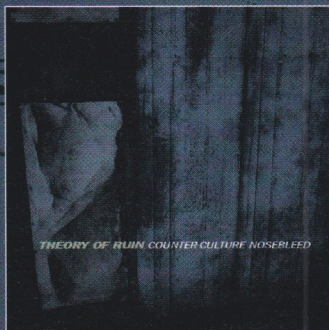
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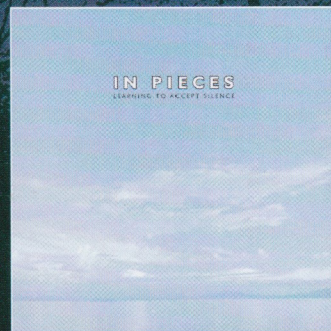


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The Star Wars

Words and Illustrations by Noel Shankel

Words alone cannot describe the utter disappointment I felt after watching *The Star Wars Holiday Special*. I had heard so much about it, from friends, strangers, the homeless, that I simply could not wait to sit back in my room, pack a tight bowl, crack into a High Life, and enjoy the mysteries of this forgotten sequel to the *Star Wars* saga. When the film first began, I couldn't help but laugh. As it went on, the laughter turned to boredom, the boredom to anger, anger to hatred. This "review" is simply a warning to all of those out there who have any interest in this film to stay as far away as possible, not to give in to curiosity, and spend the two hours it would take to watch this disaster doing something more entertaining, like staring at your big toe.

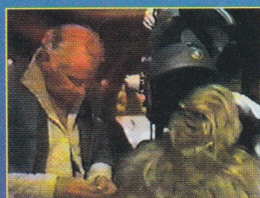
The "plot" of this "hidden treasure" revolves around Chewbacca trying to get home to Endor to see his family for "Life Day," the Wookiee version of Christmas. Released in 1978, and now known to many as *The Chewbacca Christmas Special*, this TV movie was simply an excuse to cash in on the frenzy of the *Star Wars* revolution. Surprisingly, much of the original cast is featured in this confusing mess, including Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, and the voice of James Earl Jones, not to mention cameos by Bea Arthur, Jefferson Starship, and a few other washed-up celebrities trying to make a quick buck.

The film opens with an intimate portrait of Chewbacca's family: Mala, his wife; Itchy, his dad; and Lumpy, his son.

The first ten minutes of the film make no sense, mostly because no one is speaking any English. The Chewbacca family growls and moans at one another, leaving the viewer in total darkness about what the hell is happening. You'd think there would be a few subtitles tossed in to give the audience a clue, but there aren't.

About halfway through the film, right around the time I was questioning what little faith I had in humanity, Bea Arthur of *Golden Girls* fame shows up. She plays a bartender at the Cantina, and sitting at the bar is some weird old dude who drinks through a hole on the top of his head. However, that's not the most disturbing part, but rather, this old man's love for Bea Arthur, and his desire

WE ALL THOUGHT THIS WAS A KIDS MOVIE UNTIL THIS HORRIBLY INAPPROPRIATE SCENE SHOWED UP...



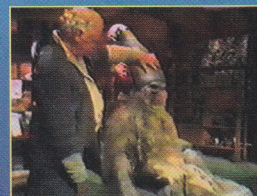
"Now then Itchy, I thought you might like this, one of those, ah, well it's a real, kind of hard to explain. It's a real... WOW, if you know what I mean."

1



[Cue late 70's, porno-sounding music, weird sperm people show up and swim across the screen...]

2



"Happy Life Day... I dooo mean Happy Llife Day."

[Itchy Grunts.]

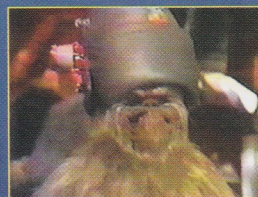
[Diane Carroll appears...]

3



"I know you're searching for me, searching, searching... I am here. My voice is for you alone. I am found in your eyes only. I exist for you. I am in your mind as you create."

4



[More Grunts from Itchy. This time louder and more excited.]

5



"OH YES! I can feel my creation [giggles]. I'm getting your message, are you getting mine? OH! OH! We are excited aren't we? Well just relax...."

6



"Now we can have a good time, can't we?"

[Passionate grunting from Itchy, motioning of right arm up and down.]

7



"I'll tell you a secret, I find you adorable. I don't need to ask how you find me, you see, I am your fantasy, I am your experience, so experience me."

8



"I am your pleasure so enjoy me. This is our moment together in time, that we might turn this moment into an eternity..."

[Cue musical number...]

9



Holiday Special

to make sweet love to her ass. Maybe he's gay, and doesn't realize that Bea is a woman. Either way, it's unsettling to watch.

The Bea Arthur cantina scene goes on for more than twenty minutes, or so it seems, and concludes with, yes, a musical number. Bea dances and sings with numerous creatures, including Hammerhead, Walrusman, and Greedo (although, if memory serves me correctly, Greedo had his head blown off by Han Solo in the first film... oh well), before wishing everyone a good night and closing up shop. The question that pops into my mind is, "does every night at the Cantina end like this, with a conga line leading out the door and Bea Arthur singing about 'goodnight but not goodbye'?" If so, I think it might be time for the locals to find a new watering hole.

There are many memorable moments within this film, from a coked up Carrie Fisher desperately trying to remember her lines, the unexplained shift mid-film from live action to cartoon, and an intimate embrace between Chewbacca and Mala. However, the one scene that

puts all others to shame is the Wookiee masturbation scene. That's right, you heard me, the Wookiee masturbation scene.

Itchy, Chewbacca's father, places a hologram helmet on his head and sits down in what looks like an electric chair. A dear friend places a cartridge into the chair and tells Itchy that's he's about to see something amazing. What Itchy sees is a hologram version of Diane Carol, a washed up 70's diva, as she seductively sings and dances in front of a psychedelic backdrop. She tells Itchy, "Do you want to know a secret? I find you adorable." Itchy then proceeds to bang the chair with an orgasmic look upon his face so that she'll repeat this secret to him over and over again. Inter-cut with Diane singing are multiple close-ups of Itchy's face as he spazzes out with sexual delight.

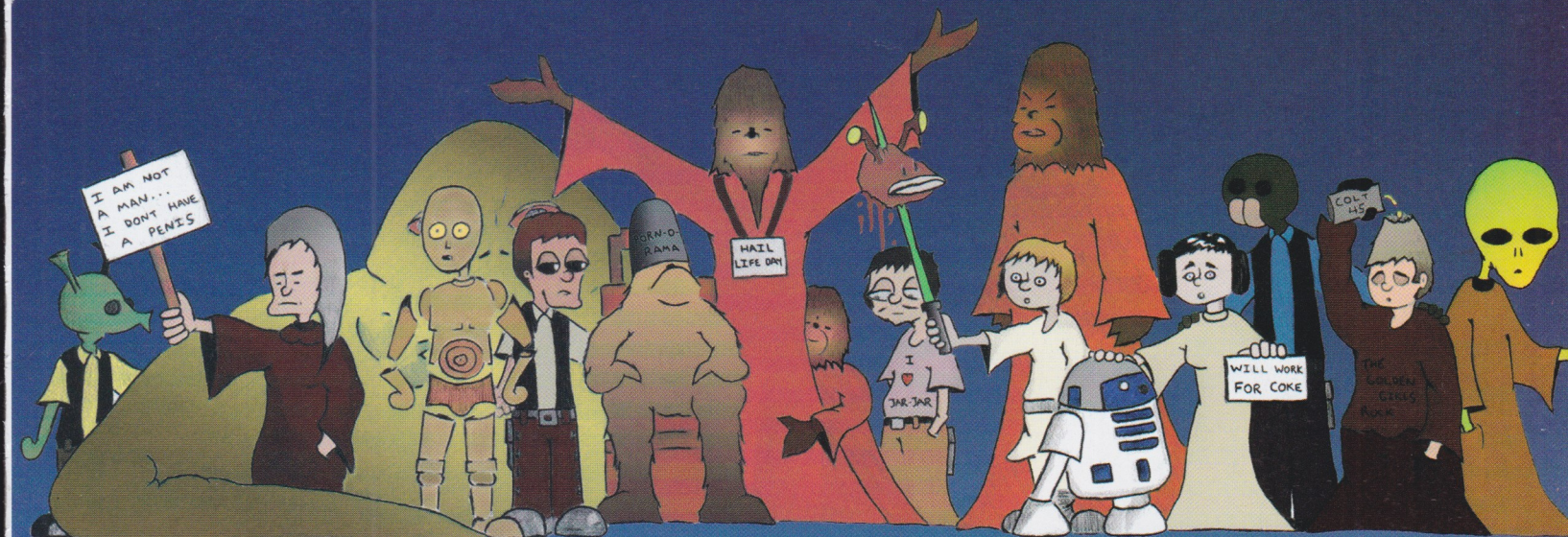
The film finally ends with Chewbacca returning home to his family. Everyone greets and hugs one another, and you think the film is over... but no. The Chewbacca family gets decked out in red dresses, hold up some plastic-looking orbs, and transport into

another dimension filled with numerous Wookies, all growling and moaning at one another. This, I suppose, is the Life Day celebration, but it looks more like an out-take from the last twenty-minutes of *2001*. To top it all off, Carrie Fisher shows up one more time and sings a song about the beauty of Life Day. Yeah, that's exactly what this film needed, another musical number.

If for some reason you still have an interest in seeing this cinematic monstrosity for your own, you might have a hard time tracking down a copy. Most video stores do not carry it, with good reason. I suggest trying to buy a copy off of Ebay, or shopping around at garage sales, or just looking in the nearest dumpster.

If you do come across a copy, and you decide to buckle down and watch it, at least follow this advice: Drink a few twelve packs of cheap beer, have a few shots of Whiskey, smoke as much pot as your lungs can handle, and keep your finger firmly pressed on the fast forward button. Then, maybe, just maybe, you'll be able to get through it.

Happy Life Day.



The Reunion Show

Brian and Skully of The Reunion Show review their favorite 10 records of all time....

Jawbreaker "Dear You"- This album changed my perspective on this style of mid-90s pop punk. I had heard *24 Hour Revenge Therapy* and thought it was a cool album, but there was something about this album. Every time I listen to it I find something new that I love, whether it's one of Blake's genius lyrics, a drum-fill, a little guitar line here and there—there's always something new and interesting about this record. Not many current songwriters can stir up as many emotions and paint such a great picture with their lyrics as Blake can. I can still listen to a song like "Sluttering" and hear something I had never heard before, or gain some new meaning from it. I simply don't go on the road without this record and at least once a tour my whole band has to listen to it. And it's cool by them because they also recognize its greatness. **B**

Pixies "Trompe Le Monde"- For an album made in complete turmoil—from band members hating each other to knowing they were going to break up—it sounds like the work of four people who could read each other's musical minds. When I was in high school, this was my soundtrack. This was the key to my indie rock cred. This was the background to every moment that I held dear. This was the record you put on when that cute little "alternative" chick you were trying to score with came over and you wanted to be cool, but you didn't want to break out the Minor Threat records because there was no way it could get her in the mood. The cover of "Head On" is key, as is "Letter To Memphis" and "Alec Eiffel." Some would say that *Surfer Rosa* or *Doolittle* are better albums, but to me, a record made under the circumstances they were to come out this classic is amazing. **B**

Quicksand "Slip"- Walter Schreifels might easily be one of the most important musicians in my life. He's been in so many important bands. Quicksand is the most important of them though and this is their defining record. It invented a whole new genre of post-hardcore. Somewhere between hardcore and what is now construed as "emo." It influenced a whole generation of kids who had missed the boat on '80s hardcore to go back, learn the rules, break them and create their own sound. Hearing that drum-fill going into "Faze" was the reason for me to get out of bed many days. I could listen to this album and when I saw people in school, think to myself, "Man, I'm way better than you because I listen to Quicksand." **B**

Nirvana "Nevermind"- I thought this one was really obvious. I think everyone who has done one of these lists includes Nevermind, mainly because if you don't you're a jackass. Rather than analyze the importance of the songs of this record or its value to society, etc. I'll give my little personal Nirvana story. The first time I heard Nirvana was when they debuted

their video for "Smells Like Teen Spirit" on 120 Minutes on MTV. For the duration of the video I was paralyzed by the music. I couldn't move, I couldn't blink, and I don't think for 4 and a half minutes I even took a breath. I didn't even know what he was saying, I didn't really know what was going on, but there was something that spoke to me on TV and I wasn't sure if anyone else at all was watching, but this was going to be my new favorite band. The next day I bought *Nevermind* and I'm not sure if it ever left my CD player that entire month. A lot of kids today don't get it. They don't understand how important Nirvana was to the whole underground. They validated the entire process of being in a band and coming from the bottom up. They destroyed glam metal with one song. Nirvana put realism back in music and nothing will ever touch that. Nothing has yet and I may be long gone before something ever does again. **B**

The Beatles "Abbey Road"- This selection was of the utmost difficulty for me; I could have easily picked two or three Beatles records to put in my top five alone. However, I forced myself to narrow it down to *Abbey Road*. This record encompasses everything The Beatles ever wanted to do with music. It offers gorgeous melodies, virtuoso like musicianship, and incredible songs—standard fare on many Beatles records, but refined like none other here. *Abbey Road* has the band at its finest, demonstrating that they are more than just a catchy pop band. From the beautifully crafted psychedelic songs like "Sun King," to George Harrison's perfect love song "Something," to the universal message of "Come Together," the Beatles had not only matured as song writers and performers, but declared with undeniable authority, that were going out on top—leaving the world with one of the greatest rock and roll albums in their wake. **S**

Bob Marley and the Wailers "Exodus"- I can think of no other album that successfully encapsulates the passion and desires of a people like *Exodus*. This music is one of faith and love, yet at the same time Marley's message demanded movement and change. This record was geared towards the poverty stricken people of Jamaica's ghettos, and was a valiant attempt to galvanize them into action, while offering them hope for the future. In addition to these impassioned messages, *Exodus*, features some of the Wailer's most uplifting and positive songs—such as the jovial "Three Little Birds," and "One Love/People Get Ready," a song which has effectively become the Jamaican national anthem. In fact, this entire record has become a sort of anthem for a people, right down to the title track urging his people to rise up and overcome severe adversity. *Exodus* is one of most powerful records rock and roll has ever seen. **S**

Radiohead "The Bends"- Many people will argue this one

to death with me, but I really feel that this is their greatest record. This is not to detract anything from their other albums, it's just that to me the essence of Radiohead lies here. They seamlessly blend melodies and raw guitar rock, as they rip to shreds the veil of pretty Brit pop. *The Bends* is dark and when you hear lyrics such as "I don't want to be krippled cracked shoulders writs knees and back ground to dust and ash crawling on all fours..." you know they mean it. Start to finish this record offers provocative lyrics, powerful and dark music, and will stand alone as a work of terrific importance. **S**

Elvis Costello "This year's Model"- Okay, this record is flat out unstoppable!! I have yet to understand why it gets overlooked with bizarre regularity, but I intend to put a stop to that here..."No action," the album's opener, is an urgent explosion, a battle of frustration that's in and out in under 2 minutes. Included here also is the disco influenced mega hit, "Pump It Up," and the brilliant "(I don't want to go to) Chelsea," which describes the excessive lifestyle of the famed London neighborhood. Important to note here are The Attractions and their invaluable role in making this music so interesting—they draw on so many influences, and their performance is stellar. Another one of the great elements of this record (as is true for all of Elvis' music) is the great lyrical content. It's difficult to say which is Costello's stronger songwriting asset. Is it his musical contribution or his lyrical? He plays on words like a five year old in a park, and though his metaphors are obviously intentional—"...don't act like you're above me, just look at your shoes"—they do not seem forced, as they flow with ease. **S**

Superdrag "Head Trip in Every Key"- This record is an under appreciated masterpiece. The greatest drug record of the 90's without question, this band had been through it all, and decided to stop caring. The result was one of the sickest rock albums in years. While "Antichrist," is a deranged drug addicts' call of despair—"Coldest ice my hallucination. Crazy how my nerves were severed"—"Do The Vampire," hints at the struggles the band was going through, and the pressures placed upon them by their label. On another note, this record contains some of the greatest recorded sounds ever—with production and flawless engineering. Singer John Davis is at his strongest and best throughout this album—full of passion for not caring, offering a certain numbness to all of life's complexities and troubles. Musically *Head trip in Every Key* was far ahead of its time, and could easily be placed in a category with other great records of similar ilk, such as Weezer's *Pinkerton*, or the Lemonheads *Come on feel*. These are albums that were betrayed by a changing music scene and fickle fans, and yet they retain a greatness that is both timeless and universal. **S [LOI]**

Black Widows

Ryan of Black Widows reviews his favorite 10 records of all time....

Bad Brains "Rock For Light" (SST: 1986) - I thought maybe I shouldn't include this, simply because it's a no-brainer. Most of us know that the Bad Brains are the best hardcore band ever, if not the best band ever (I vote both). This is widely considered their best album, despite the fact that it's not exactly a "traditional" hardcore album. I must have first picked this up around 1990 or so, I distinctly remember listening to this, Faith No More's *The Real Thing* and Metallica's *And Justice For All* over and over again on a family trip to Florida when I was 12 or 13 years old. (Now I realize that Faith No More pretty much swiped the vibe and production values of *Against All*, with excellent results.) This is a perfect album with the best songwriting, playing, and insanely over-the-top-yet-masterfully-executed vocals by HR.

Dead Season - I briefly played bass for the Enkindels when I was 19. My first tour with them, actually my first tour ever, had Toronto's Two Line Filler along as tourmates. Dead Season included various former members of Two Line Filler, three of which had been in the band during the Enkindel / Two Line tour. Their original drummer Al Biddle is one of my greatest friends ever, and there was a short, yet fun filled, Dead Season / The National Acrobat tour where somewhere along the line I realized that Dead Season were one of the best bands ever. I have three CD-Rs that include (to my knowledge) everything they ever recorded - two demos, a 7", songs for a split 7" with The National Acrobat (that was never released), and a full length album. Musically, they somehow meld All, Thin Lizzy, and Swedish thrash metal into a powerful and beautiful melodic weapon. Massive groove-oriented riffs, running Lizzy-esque guitar lines, and guitar solos galore. Singer Colin Clark's wailing vocals tops it all off. He takes Phil Lynott's swelling vocal style, a little metallic punch, and somehow turns out sounding like a punk rock Van Morrison. Singing like his life depended on it, a bastard version of blue-eyed soul. A treasure that very few will ever have the chance to hear.

Fugazi "End Hits" (Dischord: 1993) - I know most people consider *Repeater* their finest work, and many are still hung up on the dub and Gang of Four inspired songs on their first two EP's. But for me, *End Hits* is their finest moment thus far. *Red Medicine* had been my least favorite Fugazi album, and when *End Hits* was released it wasn't met with my usual excitement. I thought their relevance for me would remain in their past work, but from the first song, "Break," I was enthralled and completely blown away. The arrangements here are astounding and pure, absolute genius. The guitar lines in "Foreman's Dog" stick out as being my favorite moments, but every song entirely smashes everything they'd done before, in this band or any other.

Hayden "Everything I Long For" (Outpost: 1995) - I ran across this from seeing the video on 120 Minutes back in '95. Hayden Dessor is a singer / songwriter from Toronto who was touted as being the "next Neil Young" much like Elliott

Smith was going to be the "next Simon & Garfunkel" a couple of years ago. Needless to say, neither quite achieved that status. One thing that probably kept Hayden from stardom is that his songs are really, really dark, dreary, depressing, and downright painful. This is his first, and best, album; it was recorded on 4-track in his bedroom with things like the television and model trains serving background noise and mood. Musically, he sounds like the bummed-out younger brother of J. Mascis, stoned off his ass at 3am pining equally after the 16 year-old girl down the street and her 40 year old mother. This has been the soundtrack to every single time my heart has been broken in the last seven years.

Regulator Watts "The Aesthetics Of No-Drug" (Slowdime: 1997) - While it's not easy to pick a favorite from the Hoover / Regulator Watts / Crownhate Ruin family of bands, this album stands out as my favorite. The cover art is stunning (courtesy of my design hero Jason Farrell) and goes to show that you can't judge a book by its cover, but you can judge an album by its artwork!! A class act from beginning to end, ex-Hoover singer/guitarist Alex Dunham leads this trio through 13 songs that feature his signature spiteful drawl and echoing guitar. Much like their DC-brethren Fugazi, Regulator Watts take elements of dub and indie rock to craft this sprawling, epic album. This is better than any of the post-rock / indie rock that Touch and Go / Quartersick released around this time, but sadly RW was pretty much overlooked and forgotten. Dunham's current band, Abilene, has followed the darker, quieter path started here with great results. Korosene 454's *Came By To Kill Me* gets honorable mention for almost taking this spot in among my favorites.

The Replacements "Pleased To Meet Me" (Sire: 1987) - Picking the best Replacements album is like picking the best Sabbath album... The only thing you know for sure is that it wasn't their later work. While critics seem to think that *Lif It Be* was the band's defining work, I find every this album and nearly every one that preceded it (including *Stink*, but not including *Hootenanny*) to be equally wonderful, if for different reasons each time. Yeah, this is the first 'Mats album without Bob Stinson and, sure, it does mark the beginning of the end for them. But, tough shit... this is great. They went to Memphis and teamed up with latter-day Big Star producer Jim Dickinson at Ardent Studios, all attempting to capture some of what Big Star had captured there over a decade before. Did it work? Hard to say. But what I do know is this album includes my absolute favorite song ever, Paul Westerberg's tribute to Big Star and Alex Chilton, "Alex Chilton." Maybe he had to go to Memphis to get it right but in any case, it's where rock and roll legends are made.

Seaweed "Spanaway" (Hollywood: 1995) - I guess Seaweed seemed like a safe bet during the mid-90's post-Nirvana major label feeding frenzy. But, unfortunately for some, they flopped hard along with most their peers (Jawbox, Jawbreaker, Samiam, etc) and never really

recovered. Fortunately for some of us, they had the chance, and budget, to make this album. This is back when melodic hardcore (or "post hardcore") could still rock hard, these days it seems like it mostly slithers. "Start With" comes in second on my favorite song list.

Swiz "No Punches Pulled" (Jade Tree: 1992) - There are so many DC bands that were important to me and influenced me. There's just something about Swiz that keeps them really high on the list. Jason Farrell took the reigns from Brian Baker as DC's best guitarist, and I've been doing my best to rip them both off for years. Swiz is mainly all about the guitar work, fast and crazy, weaving in and out of powerful riffs, tons of pull-offs and bent notes. To me, Jason Farrell is firmly planted up there with other hardcore punk guitar gods like Baker and Greg Ginn. Then there are Shawn Brown's rambling statements on life, lies, lovers and everything else in between. The lyrics are simple, straightforward and perfect. "Don't patronize with me with apologies, you son of a bitch. The devil has many faces and yours just fits." Sweetbelly Freakdown was the same guys and equally as good, but no one (myself included) seemed to figure that out at the time.

Wilco "Being There" (Reprise: 1996) - One of only a few records released in the last 12 years that I was turned on to by Rolling Stone magazine. Their description and five star review of this masterpiece piqued my interest and I checked it out. Although Mark Brickey from Enkindel had played Uncle Tupelo for me years before, I'd never known much about the "alt-country" scene. This 19 song double album blew my mind. From mildly punked out Faces style rockers, to stirring country crooning and bluegrass infected rock *Being There* was a massive feat, one of the best executed albums of the 90's. Wilco would lose themselves over the next couple of years, but then finally return to the dark experimental place they explored here on *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, an equally rewarding listen. Ever since hearing Wilco, my (not so) secret desire has been to play music like this someday.

Wire "Pink Flag" (Restless Retro: 1977) This is an obviously classic album, yet remains somewhat overlooked compared to many other punk albums from that time. There are tons of bands that owe Wire much more than a passing debt; they perfected the simple, really short punk pop song. They pull incredibly memorable melodies out of jangly guitar chords and half-talked vocals. Unlike the art bands that preceded and followed them (and their own subsequent albums), Wire's debut contains nearly no pretension, no assumptions of its own importance. I always got the idea that Gang of Four knew they were geniuses, Wire just got right to the point. They said what they needed to say, threw in a little melody, and got the fuck outta there. A complete and true punk aesthetic. [LOI]

18 Visions

Ken of 18 Visions reviews his favorite 10 records of all time....

The Beatles "White Album"- This is the most amazing record of all time. I'm sure it will be my number one forever seeing how it is so timeless. Gwen Stefani once said in an interview regarding this record that it feels like the songs were always there and that the Beatles are simply the ones to put it out. The Beatles threw out everything they know about conformity and wrote this record to fit every type of music through ages and styles. It's a commentary on politics, life, and love. Most people will never tell you that their favorite Beatles song comes from this record, but as a whole this album stands out among all others. The rest of these really aren't in order, this is the only one which I feel needed to be actually ranked.

Radiohead "OK Computer"- Most people ridicule me when I say that I really only listen to 4 or 5 songs on this album, but the way I feel about those few songs is strong enough for this to be in my top ten. I first heard "Paranoid Android" in 8th or 9th grade and thought it was one of the coolest songs I had ever heard. It sounded different from anything I was used to and it actually made me feel something when I listened to it. "Exit Music", "No Surprises", and "Karma Police" also do this for me. It's difficult for me to be really moved by a song, but Radiohead pulls it off quite often.

Bjork "Post"- From start to finish this is one of the most creative records I have ever heard. It starts out with "Army of Me" which is, for lack of a better word, heavy, then drifts into sleepy tracks like "Possibly Maybe". The combination of Bjork and her programmers is extremely creative and can't be copied well even though people like Madonna have tried. I saw Bjork once at the Coachella festival and even pregnant this girl could put on an awesome show. It felt weird walking on heads and stage diving to Bjork, even weirder for the people whose heads I walked on.

Queens of the Stone Age "Songs for the Deaf"- Maybe it's because this record is new and something I have been waiting for since the end of Failure and Nirvana, but right now

it's going in my top ten. I love the way this record is laid out, like it's a radio station that's playing the songs with a DJ and everything. It's a perfect combination of classic rock, grunge, hard rock. If I smoked weed I would definitely do it to this record. Coming from a drummer, I would suggest that any musician buy this record just for the sake of hearing David Grohl's best work ever.

Sunny Day Real Estate "The Rising Tide"- Most people wouldn't agree, but I think this is the best record Sunny Day ever put out. The first and last songs are literally perfect bookends to make you want to listen to the entire album straight through each time. They're powerful, emotional, and talented. I saw them play all these songs live and it was perfect. I've never heard a voice that could fill the room so well. Also, seeing them with three guitarists or two guitarists and a pianist filled every crack. I was really sad to see this band go.

The Cardigans "The Gran Turismo"- Unexpected, huh? For a while this was my favorite band because of this album. I celebrate the entire collection, but this is my favorite because of all the electronics and the evolution of Nina's voice. This record had a lot more feeling and versatility to it than any of the previous. I don't think it ever picked up partly because of the weak radio hit and the fact that all the songs were too slow to be pop [singles] like "Love Trap". It's probably the reason why we haven't heard anything from them since.

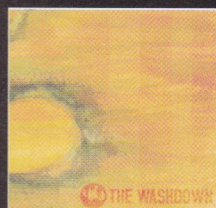
Cave In "Until your Heart Stops"- Don't get me wrong, I love Jupiter and everything else this band has ever put out, but you have to treat this band like it's two separate bands. When this came out I loved everything about it: the production, the noise tracks, the metal, the classic rock, and the fact that they pulled all of this off as a four piece. Usually I have a small attention span for metal records, they hit me hard fast and die out fast, but I can listen to this record any time still.

Failure "Fantastic Planet"- If I did heroin on a regular basis I could probably relate to what this man is going through, but since I never have I tend to convert the lyrics to love songs with a "can't live with 'em, can't live without em" approach. My friend once told me that he was really tempted to try heroin just so he could write comparative music. This record is really that good to push people to limits they never would otherwise. I would love to do a band to emulate this record, it's been done before, but I can't get enough of what comes out when they do.

Metallica "And Justice For All"- I don't see how anyone could have a top ten list without at least one Metallica album on it. Maybe it's because I was raised on metal, but I think this record deserves so much more recognition than it receives. I have heard that the members of Metallica hate this recording. It was produced by the same guy that does bands like Obituary and anything else in the late '80s that was brutal but very dry. I swear there is no bass guitar on this album, but the guitar work is so good it makes you forget all that. My favorite track is "To Love is to Die", but there's no vocals so it tends to go unnoticed.

Unbroken "Life Love Regret"- My favorite hardcore record of all time. It reminds me of being in a freshman in high school and going to my first shows and seeing a band that didn't look or sound like any of the others they played with. They were all straight edge, they were all kids that loved metal and new wave and they didn't care what anyone thought. It might be one of the sloppiest recording of all time, but it added to the sound and the mess-ups were the kind you waited to hear and depended on. It's really sad to see the Unbroken section on the Indecision Records' DVD since it mostly covers the suicide of guitarist Eric Allen. They went out like legends of a classic rock band. [LOI]

THE WASHDOWN



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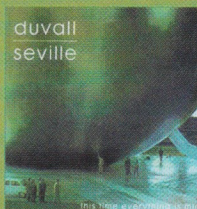
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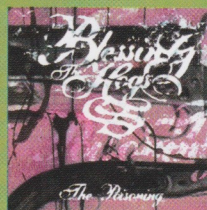
"The guitars ring out and bleed, blurring the edges of the songs. The rhythm section seems to be bent on revolution and there are some moments where the perfect match of vocal harmonies and guitar slashes prove potent." - MRR. Recently toured with Bigwig.



duvall
seville

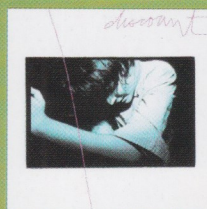
DUVALL/SEVILLE
"This Time..." split CD
Double Zero Avail. 10/29

Duvall and Seville recently co-headlined this summer's Double Zero tour, further establishing each band's position in the new hierarchy of indie rock. This split release will surely become more than just a souvenir: it'll be a milestone.



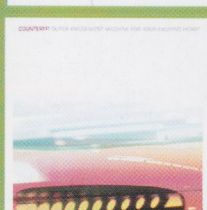
BLESSING THE HOGS
"The Poisoning." CD
Goodfellow Avail. 10/29

Blessing the Hogs deliver adrenaline soaked doses of blistering metallic hardcore. With diverse musical influences, BTH have forged a unique, abrasive sound containing unyielding riffing patterns and startling time changes. On tour with Today is the Day.



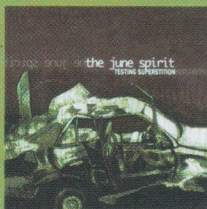
DISCOUNT
"Singles Collection Vol. 2" CD
New American Dream Avail. 10/1

A collection of singles and rare compilation tracks. These songs span the 2nd half of Discount's career and feature some of their most brilliant moments. Comes with a 32 page booklet filled with photos.



COUNTERFIT
"Super Amusement Machine..." CD
Negative Progression

Counterfit is a musical powerhouse from sunny San Diego, CA. Technical, yet melodic, Counterfit display the rawest of emotions through their deeply expressive songs. They recently earned the #1 spot on the emo charts of mp3.com.



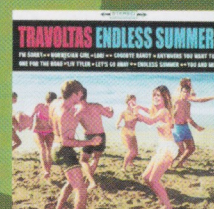
THE JUNE SPIRIT
"Testing Superstition" CD
Negative Progression

TJS are the newest rock sensation hailing from the swamps of New Jersey. They create some of the most earnest & endearing music out today capturing a smooth yet technical guitar sound that sweeps back & forth from minimalist to enormous.



LAW OF INERTIA
Magazine/CD Issue #11

The best independent publication! Features interviews with Sparta, Thursday, Cursive, Glassjaw, Shai Hulud, Pedro the Lion, Rye Coalition, Dag Nasty, + more. The CD features Dag Nasty, Home Grown, Gamits, Bad Astronaut, and more.



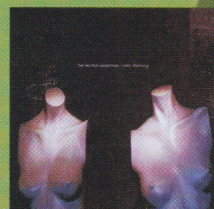
TRAVOLTAS
"Endless Summer" CD
Fast Music

This 5 piece band from Amsterdam sets a new standard for power-pop. With buzzsaw guitars, awesome songwriting, and incredible vocal harmonies, Travoltas bridge the gap between Weezer, The Ramones, and The Beach Boys.



Various Artists:
"Playing 4 Square 2" Comp CD
Suburban Home Records

4 way label sampler featuring tracks from Fueled By Ramen, Drive Thru, Polyvinyl, and Suburban Home. Tracks include The Gamits, Finch, Rainer Maria, The Stereo, Home Grown, Counterfit, Recover, and more.



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jets to brazil
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THE SCARIES
"Souvenir" CD
Law Of Inertia Avail. 10/29

Combining intelligent, heartfelt vocals with super-charged guitars and more hooks than a tackle-box, the Scaries are a force to be reckoned with. Features a current member of Sorry About Dresden (Saddle Creek).



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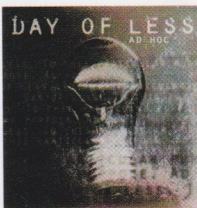
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LATER: DIVISION OF LAURA LEE "A POSTCARD FROM THE
HEARTLAND" (EARLY MATERIAL) CD



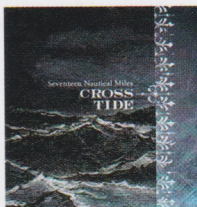
THE SOLO PROJECT *Send/Break*

Arizona's new heroes. Their debut 12 song CD will hit you like a rock. Super catchy songs with thick guitar hooks. Fans of Jimmy Eat World, The Juliana Theory and even Snapcase will eat this up. Listen to mp3's at www.riserecords.com



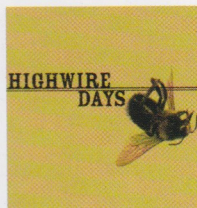
DAY OF LESS *ad hoc*

Who said oil and water couldn't mix? Blurring the lines of genres, Day of Less offer their debut full length CD. Well thought out words sung/screamed to a wall of guitars. Full on rage to tranquil melodies. A sound all their own. Recommended for fans of Grade, Hum and Far.



CROSSTIDE *seventeen nautical miles*

Portland, Oregon's favorite band brings you their 10 song masterpiece. The vocals on this record are stunning and nothing short of amazing. Well crafted songs with a big guitar rock sound. Fans of Smashing Pumpkins, Texas is the Reason and Radiohead should take note.



HIGHWIRE DAYS *hell from the eyes up*

A refreshing new band from Santa Cruz. Featuring Andrew from SCREW 32 on vocals. This 12 song CD takes you back to the days. Fast, melodic and catchy hardcore similar to Lifetime, Gorilla Biscuits and Dag Nasty. On tour w/ Breathe In this winter.



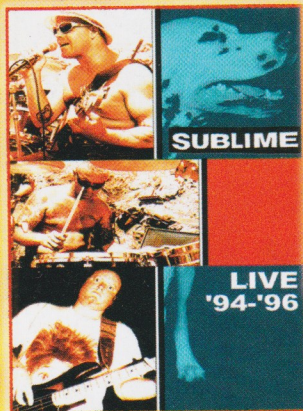
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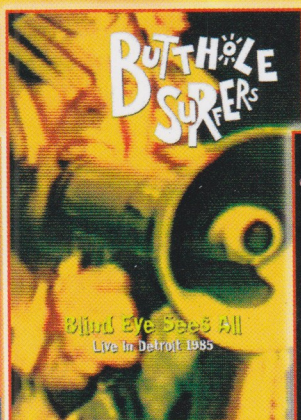
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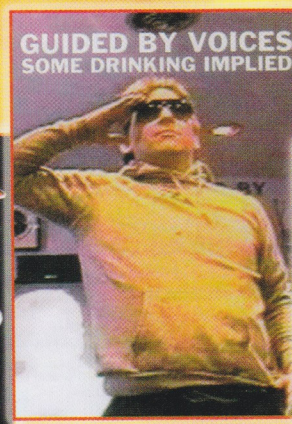
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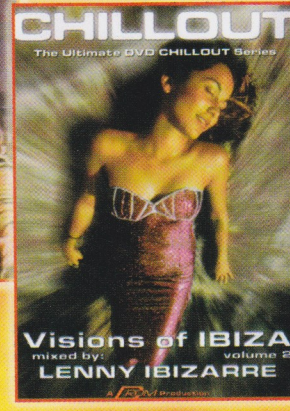
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LAST NIGHT

STORY BY MARK LAFLEUR

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RUSS PERRY

I wake up and my head is soft. I am comfortable only because I'm not moving. I know if I move, it will be too much for my body and the ache will keep me awake. So I lay still and fall back to sleep.

I wake up and see her blonde hair in my face. Her back must be facing me. I look her over a little and conclude that we are in fact spooning, and I am having trouble figuring out where to put my arms. This keeps me awake. We are on our right sides and my right arm is under the pillow I'm on and I wedge the other arm between us. My fingertips graze something soft and a little moist. I flick the object away and fall back to sleep.

Her alarm rings. I know I'm in her room because I only wake up to music. It takes her a while to turn it off and the buzzing is really starting to irritate me. She sets it to go off again in an hour. I feel around with my fingertips again and there are more little balls and now that I feel my shirt, I notice there is something crusty where soft cotton used to be. I'm beginning to get curious, but I fall back to sleep.

I wake to her blonde hair tickling my nose and her body rubbing against me. She's trying to get closer. I move the arm that was between us and rest it on my side where I feel more crust. I want to know what's on me and the bed I'm sleeping on, but at the same time I don't want to move. Moving might wake her and I'll have to get up before I discover what is on me and I'll feel the hurt in my head and the thirst in my mouth. The alarm rings. Buzz! Buzz! I almost jump and I can feel the weight of my head, the alcohol induced pain it absorbed from last night's binge. She crawls over me to get out of bed and heads for the bathroom. I check the bed for the anomalies I keep finding.

Vomit.

I've been sleeping in vomit for hours, just rolling around, grinding it into the fibers of my shirt and the blue and yellow of her comforter. Is it my

vomit, or hers, or both of ours? I peel a noodle off of my shoulder and drop it to the floor.


The toilet flushes and the door opens and here I am in her bed lying in what is most likely my vomit: regurgitated cafeteria food, two forties of malt liquor, a premixed Kahlua mudslide and two scorpion bowls soaked through to the mattress, and here I am just lying on top of it all, pretending to sleep, wishing I was someplace else. She climbs over me and resumes her spoon position, not noticing that what we consumed last night is now on her bed, and by the way her breathing has changed she's

already sleeping again.

I just want to get the hell out of this room and apparently blondy is going to sleep all afternoon. My senses are starting to work again and the alcohol in the puke is starting to hurt my nose. I can't believe this girl can just sleep through this.

The alarm buzzes again. She turns it off and lies back down. She mumbles something to herself about not wanting to work today. Once again she climbs over me and goes out the door. I hear her using the sink and walking around a little. Then, silence. I look at the clock and decide to leave after twenty





minutes if she doesn't return. She must have gone to work or something. I get up to see the mess. It's on her pillows, soaked through the sheets, and some even splattered onto her desk and chair. I'm wondering how both of us somehow slept through a fit a projectile vomiting. I go to the bathroom and get some toilet paper to clean her desk and chair, and I roll her sheets up into a ball. I run out of her suite to the staircase when I realize I left my boots in her room. I put the sheets down and go back in for the shoes. On my way back out, there she is sitting on the couch in her common room.

"Hey." The first thing she says to me all morning.

"I forgot my boots."

"I gotta go to work soon. You going to go upstairs and crash?"

No, I'm going upstairs to clean the puke you somehow still haven't noticed off your sheets and bring them back while you're at work. "Yeah, I'm gonna

take a shower," I say. I look at my shirt and see the tan and orange vomit camouflaged shirt that was white last night. She doesn't seem to notice this, or the chunks of some half digested vegetable that is stuck to my arm.

"Well, thanks for making sure I got home okay last night."

"Hey no problem. Have fun at work." And I leave with the irony of her thanking me hanging in the air. *Thanks for sleeping in puke with me.*

Last night. What did we do last night? We both woke up totally clothed. I remember drinking scorpion bowls way too quickly. I pick up the pile of soiled bedding and head up the spiraling staircase. She's on the fourth floor and I'm on ten and somewhere around seven I am a little dizzy and worrying about adding blood stains to her sheets if I should fall down these stairs. I am breathing heavily by the time I reach ten and my mouth is even drier than before. Dehydration is setting in. I

dump
her
things
into two
washers.

Two
washers
plus two driers
equals four
dollars in quarters.

Look what this is
costing me. I get to
my room and the phone
is ringing.

"Hello."

"Hey its me. This might
sound crazy but do you know
where my sheets are."

She finally noticed.

"Yeah I'm washing them." I realize
how stupid that sounds especially in
the matter of fact tone I said it in.

"Oh, okay. You get sick last night?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

"All right, just leave the sheets
outside my door when they're done.
Oh and you left your coat down here.
I'll leave it in the common room."

"Okay thanks."

"Sure. See ya later."

"Later."

So the sheets are in the wash, and
I need someone to talk to about what
the hell happened last night. First I
shower, because I really couldn't stand
marinating in my vomit for much longer.

I give Chris a call.

"Morning sunshine," I say.

"Where'd you sleep last night," he asks.

"Fourth floor man."

"Nice. You get laid?"

"I woke up and we were both fully clothed." I go on to tell him about the vomit and washing the sheets. We laugh uncontrollably. I didn't realize how funny the situation was until I told the story for the first time.

"So Chris, how was your night. I'm guessing your girl stayed over again."

"Yeah but I got sick last night too. I'm having sex with Celene, right. Then I get real sick feeling and I run to the bathroom. I'm in there hunched over the toilet, naked, puking and I hold up my hand and give the sign of the beast man. You know, when you're puking. Me and my buddies would always do the sign and everyone would cheer. But last night, I'm alone man. No one's there to see the sign, but I still do it, you know, for the boys."

"What about Celene?"

"Oh, I go back in there to finish up and she's passed out. So I pushed her over and crashed too."

I laugh.

"I can't believe you didn't

get laid man," Chris says. "You guys were all over each other."

"Really? In public?"

"Yeah while we were waiting for the cab. Me and Celene are in the cab and you two are making out on the curb. I tell you to get the hell in the cab and you hold up your finger, you know, telling me *one minute*, and you just kept going. We almost left you guys."

"Fuck man. Hooking up in public, sleeping in puke. How am I going to tell my kids about nights like these."

"Oh we tried to skip out on the bill last night too," Chris says.

"I remember that sort of."

"Yeah, I left eight bucks on the table and we get up. We're all putting our shoes on, because, you know, they make you take 'em off and shit, we get to the door and one of the girls can't open the fucking thing. The waitress comes running over. *You have to pay!* I say, *We left money* and she's like, *It's eighty-eight dollars.* I go, *You're kidding.*

I thought it was eight. You go, *I don't have any money* and you run out of the restaurant. It was hilarious. The girls ended up paying."

"She paid for my drinks, let me make out with her and crash in her bed and what do I do? I puke in her bed. Jesus Christ."

"Hey at least you got some."

"Good point," I say. "You hungry man? I need some food before I collapse."

"Yeah man. Come down to my suite."

"I have to put her sheets in the dryer. I'll be down in a minute."

"Later."

"Later."

College.

I wake up in 1014, 429, 869 Beacon, 1306 Commonwealth at 12:16, 3:42, 5:30. AM or PM, light or dark. Is the sun setting or rising? Get her digits, 617-262-7654, 5' 4", 108 pounds, 34C. I'll meet you at 7:15 in 714. It's a suite. I fall asleep and wake up to these numbers.

I'm a number in her cell phone's memory. She's a number to me. The fourth girl I've slept with, the first I've puked on. I'm twenty-one years old, sixth in my class, first to puke in her bed. I'm a number.



photo taken from ryan joseph shaughnessy

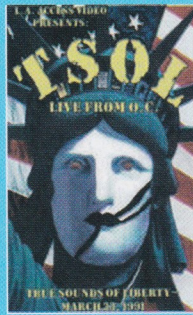
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((FIDDLER))

Video Reviews



Sublime: Live '94-'96 (MVD) DVD 62 minutes- People are always laughing and making fun of me because my butt-crack is perpetually showing. It's not that I want to show it off to people or that I can't afford a belt. Rather, my pants just won't stay up. It has socially crippled me. While watching this video though, I found out that the late Bradley Nowell suffered as I do and still went on to make some of the best and most memorable music of the ska-punk genre. This is one of those rare occasions where I could actually see a reason to watch a DVD of live performances, since the band's singer is... you know, dead and all. There was inevitably a certain charm in being there while Bradley strummed away, butt crack showing proudly, but somehow I think watching it on video saved me from a lot of hippies, frat boys, and pot smoke. It also looks to have saved me from some of the most pathetic attempts at "moshing" I have ever seen. I can hardly blame the band, though, for having such pit-inapt crowds. There really is a lot of material on this disc, most of which is good quality. This is a disc worth checking out, especially if you never got the chance to see the band live when Bradley was still around. Butt Cracks Unite! **Stan Horaczek**



TSOL: Live From O.C. (L.A. Access Video) DVD 48 minutes- I've been to my fair share of shows throughout the years and I have learned that there are three kinds of people that stand in the back while bands are playing. First, there are the girls that see no need to go up near the stage to prove that "hardcore is just not boys' fun." Second, there are the boys in the back trying to make out with said girls. And third are the middle-aged parents whose bondage pants wearing 13 year-old was not allowed to go to the show alone. This video is a great way for active punk rockers like me to find out what its like to see a show through their eyes. And it sucks. For those of you not familiar with TSOL, they are the band that wasn't The Vandals in the Penelope Spheeris classic *Suburbia*, they were the other band.

This is a no frills video of the band's March 23, 1991 reunion show in Orange County, California. The line up included all of the original members for the first time since 1982. The tape is dark and the camera work is reminiscent of a Chinatown bootleg, but if you are a fan of TSOL or you were actually at the show, this might be worth picking up. If you only know them by *Code Blue* you would be better off spending the money to actually go see them in concert. **Stan Horaczek**



What the Punk?! (MVD) DVD 49 minutes- Anyone who has ever made it out to the Warped Tour has inevitably come home with one of those Epitaph bags filled to the brim with more than a little crap. You know the stuff: stickers, flyers, demo tapes, poorly produced videotapes, mostly just stuff you wouldn't be that upset about when your mom threw it away. The only things from those bags that ever seemed to stick around were the promotional sampler CDs. Most of them come free or at least very cheap and they would usually have twenty or thirty tracks by any number of bands. Well now it seems that the comp, like everything else, has gone high-tech and moved onto the DVD video platform. *What The Punk?!* is basically 49 minutes of samples from other DVDs being distributed by a company

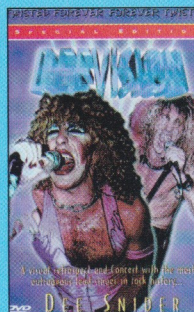
called Music Video Distributors. Most of the samples are poor VHS quality and lose your attention half way through. The two minute long video clips are not nearly informative or interesting enough to make someone who's never heard of Horace Pinker before run out and spend 20 dollars on this DVD. A DVD comp does not seem like a very good idea to me, but it must have sounded like a good idea to someone and my guess is that it was that same someone that came up with the title *What The Punk?!* If it's free, take it. If it's not, go buy *Survival of the Fattest*, a far more worthy sampler CD. **Stan Horaczek**



The Secret Weapons of Kung Fu (Kung Fu Records) DVD

55 minutes- I remember back before I was old enough to go to shows and buy merch for myself, I used to have to order my records and t-shirts through the mail. We didn't have the internet back then so I had to convince my mom to get me a money order and then mail it away before the "six to eight week" wait could begin. All that waiting sure made those things I ordered that much better though. If I didn't like a CD that I ordered I would listen to it until I did like it and then try to convince all of my friends that they liked it too. This DVD is one of those things that I would order from the label and then opening the package would be far better than the experience of actually watching the video. In theory this disc was a good idea

for Kung Fu because it prominently featured The Vandals and The Ataris (10 out of the 18 videos are by them), who are their big-ticket artists, but its repetitive nature and very poor video quality really hinders the chances that this will get another look after the first one. If you are 15 and haven't heard "I Have a Date" by the Vandals a million and one times then this might get you really excited. However, if you're old, frigid, and elitist like me then this will probably just sit on your shelf and collect dust next to your copy of The Vandals' movie *That Dam Punk*. **Stan Horaczek**



DeeVision (MVD) 110 excruciating minutes- An actual conversation between Dee Snider and the President of MVD, the company that released this DVD:

Dee Snider: Hey, I got a great idea
MVD: Dee? Shit. How'd you get this number?

Dee: I think you guys should produce a DVD about me.

MVD: That sounds about as lucrative as your movie *Strangeland*....

Dee: Seriously, no one else is smart enough to realize what big bucks a special edition concert DVD of me will make. Remember when I was in Twisted Sister?

MVD: Dee, that was 20 years ago, no one cares about you anymore.

Dee: Listen, we re-release me playing Twisted Sister songs and we have big name guests like Sebastian Bach, Dave "The Snake" Sabo, and Ronny James Dio! Yeahhhh!

MVD: Dee, those would be big names in 1988, but now those bands aren't even big enough for a *Behind the Music*.

Dee: There could be this totally rockin' part where I play "We're Not Gonna Take It" and pretend to forget the words and everyone sings a long. Everyone knows the words to that song! You guys can't afford not to put this thing out.

MVD: Okay, Dee, if we promise to put out your shitty DVD, do you promise to stop calling our offices?

Dee: Sure, as long as I can be the executive producer.

MVD: Whatever. **Jonah Bayer**

Graffiti Rock (MVD Video)- *Graffiti Rock* was a television show by Michael Holzman that brought hip hop culture into the living rooms of mainstream America in the early 1980's. Sort of like rap version of Soul Train, ya dig? This DVD features appearances by RUN DMC, Kool Moe Dee, Doug E. Fresh, Fab 5 Freddy, DJ Jazzy Jay and a few other dudes with similarly alliterated monikers. While some of these guys are better than others—RUN DMC pretty much blows everyone else out of the water—at least everyone brings their own style to the table, a trait that's sadly missing from the genre today. Seriously, this shit is hot; and if you can get past the funny hats and fat shoelaces, you can now have a first-hand look at the origins of hip-hop culture from a authentic source. What the hell are you waiting for? **Jonah Bayer**

Punk Rawk: Taking Back the Airwaves (Woodhaven Ent.) 52 minutes- I hate watching these music video compilations because most of the time these videos are just live footage of the band lip-synching to pre-recorded music while their friends bop around and jostle for screen time. And ultimately, screen time doesn't really matter because the only place these videos are seen is College Television and compilations like this. But aside from the awful name, *Punk Rawk*, is actually remarkably watchable. The most interesting aspect about this collection to me is how the budget for punk rock videos has changed: most of these videos actually have story lines, look like they were shot on film and are comparable with anything on TRL, which is pretty impressive considering an indie label's budget. Highlights here include Student Rick, AFI, and Thursday's artsy video for "Cross Out the Eyes" (MTV2, where were you on that one?) As for the bonus footage goes, I love the Thursday kids, but I'm not sure I need to see them on the set of their video or a Grade photo gallery. If nothing else, this DVD proves that punk rock doesn't have to mean grainy film and shaky cameras; whether that's a good thing in the long run is an entirely different issue. **Jonah Bayer**

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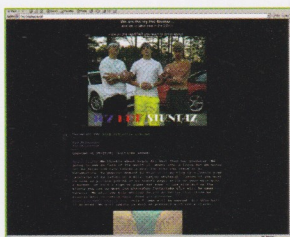
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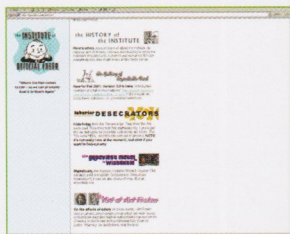


The Icy Hot Stuntaz and Its Progeny

URL: <http://stuntaz.cjb.net/>

<http://www.angelfire.com/hiphop2/stuntaname/>

The Goods: From what I can tell, this is a page devoted to some pioneers of the teenage suburban rap scene: The Icy Hot Stuntaz. Their significant web presence claims they are "takin' ova in the 2G+1" and from the looks of it they are. These were the same kids listening to Pearl Jam eight years ago. Then, Eminem happened, hip-hop invaded middle America... then the Stuntaz happened. Visit the second site's Icy Hot Stunta Name Generator to create your own Icy Hot Stunta name. Mine's "Straight Stuntin'" and quite eerily, President Bush's is "Neural Assassin." I love these teenage freaks because they are so dedicated to the suburban gangsta lifestyle. They have the most pimped-out soccer mom mini vans and have found a way to live the rock star lifestyle on their \$10 allowances. Too bad you missed their largest concert to date in the Food Mart parking lot on the Friday of homecoming weekend. **Adam Lindenbaum**



Institute of Official Cheer

Web Page: <http://www.theinstituteofofficialcheer.com>

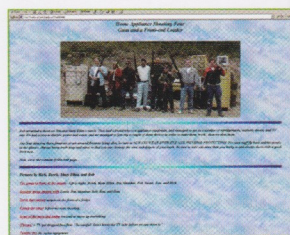
The Goods: "Sack O' Sauce in a Can O' Meat," would you believe that that phrase is trademarked by the Oscar Meyer Company? Before I visited The Gallery of Regrettable Food on this site, I thought the pinnacle of campy eats was aerosol cheese. Boy was I wrong. This sight has dozens of ads from the Golden Age of Processed Foods (1940-1973). An age when added MSG was like a sprinkling of pixie dust. Other rooms at the institute include a virtual tour of the painfully swanky Gobbler, a motel so completely swathed in shag carpet (walls included) that one wonders how many yaks had to die in order to make this masterpiece of jet-aged design. Another great stop is "The Dorkus Collection," a survey of men's fashion ads from the early '60s. Here you'll find so many shots of hiked-up pants that prove a man's waist once lay just below the nipples. Operated by James Lileks, a columnist in Minnesota, the site has a very personal feel. The Institute's sister sight, Lileks.com is also a worthy stop. By the way, the Gobbler Motel, it's shaped like a turkey. **Tim Holden**



Engrish

Web Page: <http://www.engrish.com>

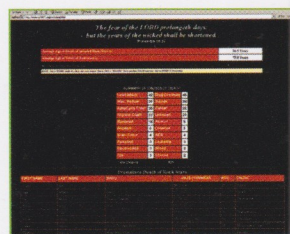
The Goods: What I took away from Engrish.com was that I should never, ever eat my Porky Pork while wearing my Pork-Joys (Translation: I should never eat a certain brand of pork rinds while wearing my pigskin gloves). Engrish.com is devoted to the wacky, cryptic and usually naughty English translations found throughout Japanese pop culture. If you've ever snickered at the instructions on a pack of chopsticks or fireworks then this site is for you. The site shows Engrish in toys, clothing, storefronts, candy, soda and more. Some gems on the site include a teen clothing store called "Violence Jack Off," a soda fountain that dispenses "Flesh Drink" and the sweet and tasty "Baked Chunk." According to the site, the Japanese incorporate English into their advertising because it's catchier than their own written language. That makes sense because, "The Art of Hot. Side by Side, I'll Be Yours Forever Because Please Don't Sleep" has a real ring to it. **Tim Holden**



Appliance Shooting Homepage

URL: <http://www.singsingsing.com/has.html>

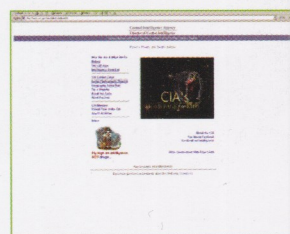
The Goods: Daniel Benton's career, like most avid marksmen's, probably began with cans and clay birds. But Benton had the vision to expand his shooting to destroy things with true retail value, like televisions, dishwashers, and refrigerators. What makes Benton so successful is he constantly develops his sport. The demolition has expanded to include hands-on combat, steel-tipped boots, sledgehammers and two-by-fours, while the victims are, of course, the appliances. Benton is a family man too. The site contains pictures of his 13-year old daughter, Tiffany, blasting through an old Apple II GS with her 12-gauge. Happy birthday, Tiff. Of all the sections, check out my personal favorite, "Guns and a Front-end Loader." I'm not sure if we should be scared of these people or not. But just to be safe, mothers, bolt down your toasters. **Adam Lindenbaum**



Prematurely Dead Rock Stars Page

URL: <http://www.av1611.org/rockdead.html>

The Goods: Looking for a Halloween costume, I stumbled on this comprehensive chart of dead rock stars. But, this page's message is not rock-n-roll. Rather, "The fear of the Lord longeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." Since the average rock star lifespan is much shorter than the average person, rock stars must be evil; therefore rock-n-roll must be the devil's music. There are holes in this logic, you know. First, rock has only been around for roughly 40 years. Also, how can you include Marvin Gaye and John Lennon and suggest their lifestyle somehow contributed to their own murder. Apparently, jazz music is still godly, despite Charlie Parker being almost single handedly responsible for heroin's fashionableness. I wonder if they'll update the page when Jerry Lee Lewis or Charlie Watts dies. I guess my criticisms are no match for scripture. Until the good Lord's hand sucks the breath from Keith Richards, party like a churchgoer. There's hope for us yet. **Adam Lindenbaum**



CIA For Kids

Web Page: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/ciakids/index.html>

The Goods: Apparently the CIA has gone through the trouble to attract a new generation of wee snoops into their fold. This site has plenty of games and activities for national security-minded youngsters. Sadly the games are about as bland as the lowly CIA pencil pushers who designed them. Such high points include "Dr. Disguise." This Shockwave-powered page allows any kid to turn an average CIA employee into a globe-trotting, regime usurping secret agent. With costumes like a subversive hippie (complete with peace symbol), Russian Cossack, or a wacky man with moose antlers, you'll be guaranteed 2 to 4 minutes of mild entertainment. After tossing aside my half naked agents, I found a page with a lot of potential: "Break The Code." Now this is spying! I felt like Ralphie with the Ovaltine ad from *A Christmas Story*. The most rewarding part of my visit to CIA For Kids was printing out the PDF file, Junior Intelligence Officer Pledge Against Drugs, and committed myself, in writing, to "Fly high on intelligence, not drugs." **Tim Holden**

Death by Stereo

Agoraphobic Nosebleed "Frozen Corpse Stuffed with Dope" (Relapse Records)—Guess how many tracks are featured here? Go on, take a guess. That's right, 38. Good guess! Now, is it possible to take a band seriously named Agoraphobic Nosebleed that titled an album what they titled it, which has 38 tracks on it, one of which entitled, "Blind Hatred Finds a Tit" and another that goes by, "Fuckmaker"? No. Not even remotely. That said, how can you do anything else but enjoy it. AN, courtesy of a drum machine, immaculately grind and blast their way through 33 minutes and 42 seconds worth of above average metal. Barring the few experimental noise tracks, and some disturbing samples, *Frozen Corpse Stuffed with Dope* packs one hell of a wallop. Any fan of extreme music with a penchant for irreverent humor needs look no further: your bible has come. Lucky you, one of the commandments of this new unholy testament is "Hang the Pope," originally recorded by Nuclear Assault. **Joe Vespa**

The All-American Rejects (Doghouse)—So this duo just got signed to a major. They also dropped off a tour with pranksters CKY because word is they couldn't handle all the harassment their tender pop-tunes suffered at the hands of the Jackasses. As far as their next record goes, it makes perfect sense this music would be on a major. It's boring, uninspired and completely unoriginal, so those suits and TRL fans should love it. This is like an over-produced version of the Get Up Kids' *Four Minute Mile* (which admittedly was a bit underproduced), minus any grit or visceral energy oft referred to as "emotion." Plus, if I have to hear the singer's awful falsetto again I'm going to freak out and break this CD in half. If I had never heard anything like this before, I might sing its praises too, but I'll take the GUK's cracking voices and out of tune guitars over these two tools' formulaic pop songs any day. **Jonah Bayer**

Aloha "Sugar" (Polyvinyl)—You know, this album is SO good, I just might be able to forgive Tsunami Bomb for being a band. (No, wait—this album is SO good, it makes it even more insulting that Tsunami Bomb is a band at all!) Aloha's primitive beats and swirling soundscapes, particularly on "Let Your Head Hang Low," are classy and impressive. The xylophone of "They See Rocks" makes the post-rock sound of Aloha romantic and dreamy, like they are a band playing at the ball in a Hans Christian Andersen tale. As I follow the song through its peaks and valleys I grow increasingly fond of everything I hear. I found some of the sonic textures of "Sugar" being built up to a peak where it sounds like two different songs being played at once, but then it falls, crashes, deconstructs, into something euphorically pleasant and soothing. The lyrics are poetic—telling a story or convicting a feeling in a roundabout way. Sometimes I hear fragments of Shiner or Cave In—but Aloha produce their songs with a prettier practice, their melodic competence sets them apart, and perhaps above bands of their ilk. The whole process is clever. This album is everything—indie, rock, jazzy, smooth, and even Björk-like. I highly recommend this and deem it to be a good investment for any CD collection. **Celeste Tabora**

Armstrong "Dick, The Lion Hearted" (Owned & Operated)—Tell me, what are you more sick of: Jennifer Love Hewitt or mediocre power pop punk bands? I personally don't know what I dislike more—they're basically tied on the top ten of my blacklist. This band is so common, down to their played-out album opening of a sampled voice. What do they think they're getting away with? Let's see—distorted choppy guitar riffs, whiny 20-something male vocals with harmonized accented parts, 4/4 with pauses—sound like partially deaf fans of Weezer, Green Day, and Jawbreaker. It's almost insulting! Okay, here's your warning. The album cover is the king of hearts from a deck of cards giving a thumbs down. If you see it, don't panic. Just call your friendly record clerk over and ask for a good recommendation. **Celeste Tabora**

Avail "Front Porch Stories" (Fat)—Richmond, VA's favorite hardcore sons, Avail, are back and waving the dirty south hardcore flag loud and proud. The best thing about an Avail record is that you always know what you're getting and you always know you're getting a quality record. While not sticking to any set formula, Avail have managed to never make the same record twice and still retain an unmistakable signature sound while growing leaps and bounds musically as a band. And so in this tradition comes *Front Porch Stories*. The most noticeable difference between this and other Avail albums is that Tim's vocals have been cleaned up to the point where they take on an almost pop sounding quality. Musically the band comes at you hard with 12 more tracks of gritty anthemic politically charged hardcore that you've come to know and love. What sets these guys apart from contemporaries is the attention paid to details in arrangements and dynamics. With more going on in the mix than most other bands Avail have managed to become the only

hardcore band I know of to incorporate slide guitars and violin into their sound. Even with this cleaned up, more mature sound, Avail still keep it real making some of the best punk music out there right now. **Aaron Lefkove**

Bad Wizard "Sophisticated Mouth" (TeePee)—And then after 40 days of hangin' with God up on Mount Sinai Moses, came down and found the children of Israel engaged in some rather unruly behavior. Beer flowed like water, whisky like wine, and free love was abundant. And Moses went back up the mountain, smashed tablets in hand and said to God, "What is this shit?" And from this biblical incident of impure and lecherous carnal minded behavior, my brothers and sisters, we can trace a direct lineage to these Brooklyn by way of the dirty south stalwarts the Bad Wizard. Bad Wizard bring it with a sonic kick in the proverbial balls of Flamin Groovies' fun, Stooges' attitude, The Nuge's libido, and more beer drenched hi-jinks than a dozen sorority girls at a wet T-shirt pledge event. Rising from the more indie rock ashes of Athens, GA's Harvey Milk, The Bad Wizard blend chunky riff based rock with some smoking five fingered fret board fury a la Thin Lizzy or Slade and leave a trail of destruction in their wake. Listen, the singer is an animal live, the guitarist is hot and she can wait better than your mother after a case of Pabst, and the rest of the band picks up the slack left behind by every two bit Johnny Thunders worshiping band. So, do yourself a favor, buy a 6-pack of Natty Ice, put this on the Hi-Fi, and raise hell like you know you were born to, motherfucker! **Aaron Lefkove**

Beatsteaks "Living Targets" (Epitaph)—The first song sounds like a bunch of Germans trying to play in the style of Turbnegro's *Ass Cobra* period, but they fail to pull it off. From there it's all downhill. The Beatsteaks belong in a musical purgatory where they want to play garage inspired rock but the harder and harder they try they farther and farther off target they get. Not quite rockin' enough to be in a league with Zeke or the Hellacopters, not quite polished enough to fit in with the poppy Epitaph bands and, quite frankly, not even good enough to listen to past track 4. **Aaron Lefkove**

The Beautiful Mistake "Light A Match For I Deserve To Burn" (The Militia Group)—The problem with punk rock these days is that too many bands therein simply have no idea what makes a band like Black Flag far more interesting and inspirational than a band like Thursday. Sure, Thursday are a good band, capable of writing some damn catchy and powerful tunes, but are they going to find a place in the history books for the conventions they dismantled, the artistic paradigms they eradicated—do they fuck shit up or do they sputter along? Plain and simple if you ask me: Black Flag were a truly amazing band who did more for artistic/musical expression than Thursday ever did, probably because it would have been hard to wear a Black Flag shirt at a mall in Middle America and be the type of kid who fit in to the flock in 1984, but anyone wearing a Thursday T-shirt at a football game in Chicago these days is probably just one of the guys (or girls). To make a long story short, The Beautiful Mistake are a good band. Their melodies soar, they are tight and polished, and they clearly rise above the rest of the bands doing the same thing (although, admittedly, I liked this music better when Thursday did it on *Full Collapse*). But, are they doing anything that is in any way threatening, different, or subverting the status quo? Nope, not at all. And will they garner my intense interest and scrutiny because of that? Certainly not. However, if you haven't heard Thursday yet, this may rock your world. **Ross Siegel**

Bloodjinn "Leave This World Breathing" (Good Fellow)—This record has merit. Alas, it also has silliness. That said, I feel it is important to state there are moments here that are not just decent, and not just good—heck, there are some moments that are downright fantastic. Yeah, I know, it took me by surprise too. Now let's discuss how Bloodjinn could improve. I could nitpick all night; instead here are my two main complaints, as this is what I think Bloodjinn suffers from most: Uno) Metal Wannabe Syndrome. Much like every other band playing this style nowadays, Bloodjinn is trying too hard to be metal. Stop that. It isn't necessary. As I mentioned above, you achieved some fantastic and beautiful moments. The superfluous Metal characteristics, i.e. blast beats, cheesy black metal riffing, and poor attempts at masturbatory solos, only detract from your songs being thoroughly effective. Dos) Song structure / cohesiveness. Pay more attention to where your songs are going, what the point is, and why every piece exists. Focus on the song's flow and structural integrity, not whether or not some goofy hardcore kid who was afraid of Slayer until last year will say, "Bloodjinn is amazing. They are soooooo metal!" I will be paying attention to Bloodjinn. With focus, maturity, and little to no concern about being metal, it is my assertion they could fill the void created by the slew of substance-less bands playing in their genre. The world could be yours, guys.

going to take it? **Joe Vespa**

Blood Red "Hostage" (Initial)—The situation in which this band finds itself reminds me of that of the 1985 Washington DC hardcore band, Embrace, featuring Ian Mackaye on vocals. That band played epic, swirling hardcore that was supposedly culled from a love of bands as diverse as The Faith to U2. The music was somewhat trivialized due to Ian's far more blunt, less multifaceted approach to singing (come on, his last band before Embrace was Minor Threat... what do you want from the guy?). No one quite noticed that the band was creating whirling guitar/bass interplay reminiscent of early U2. All they did notice was Ian... who simply was the wrong choice for vocalist. This band is the same way. Blood Red clearly love U2—their name is even taken from the great *Under a Blood Red Sky* record. Though the band features members of the great Long Island hardcore outfits, Silent Majority and Inside, they attempted to leave behind their hardcore legacies and start a band with a bit more depth (i.e. sound like U2). Unfortunately the band sounds nothing like U2 or Silent Majority. The main reason—other than the fact that no one in Blood Red is nearly as talented as Dublin's best—is that Tommy Corrigan, Blood Red's singer, just does not have nearly the genius crooning skills of Bono. To add insult to injury, Corrigan so clearly wants to be Darryl from Glassjaw on this record that I am a bit sickened. Now, Silent Majority was an absolutely fucking incredible band. Anyone who ever saw them will tell you that. It may be unfair to compare Blood Red to Silent Majority—much less U2—but just re-read what I said about Embrace above and you'll see how I feel about this record. **Ross Siegel**

Botch "An Anthology of Dead Ends" (Hydra Head) EP—I find the following fascinating: that every aggressive music fan in the world isn't clamoring about each and every mind-blowing Botch release that hits the shelves. The fact is, I hear more people tell me what a terrible band Botch is than pretty much any other big aggro-rock band out there. Seriously! You'd think people would talk shit about E-Town Concrete or Skarhead or something but instead I hear more people who genuinely don't like Botch than any other metal/hardcore band. Conclusion: those people simply do not get it. Another fact is that Botch not only have the best, most creative guitarist in all of the hardcore world, but the off-kilter sledgehammer masterpieces they create with every song are unrelenting on tape and will knock you on your ass live. Plus, the 5th song, "Afghanistan" (no not spelled wrong), solidifies Botch's place as by far the most creative hardcore band of the past half a decade. This record is amazing. Buy it or go listen to Modest Mouse. **Ross Siegel**

Boy Sets Fire "Live for Today" (Wind-up)—This should be the last mistake that BSF is allowed to make. Don't people realize what is happening here? And who are the kids that are still buying these records, thus making it possible for this band to record and release more material? Let's find them. This seems like one of those "just fulfilling our contract" records, and I hope to God that it is. It's got three shitty live tracks and three horrible, horrible new songs. I'm a little rusty on my mall-core and my nu-metal, but this can't be too distant a cousin of whatever bands are big in those genres these days. The production is more generic and more sterile than any rock record I have ever heard in my adult life. And here is an interesting trend. BSF still sing about "revolutionary" politics, all the while riding the tide into more cliché and mainstream songwriting. I guess, in truth, their politics are already as mundane and generic as their music, so it's not a question of writing songs that illustrate or enact one's political and social ideals. It is a question of a band's inability to transcend the pop-culture that they claim to hate, possibly under the guise of appealing to mall-core kids and causing a fantastic paradigm shift that will lead us into a socialist utopia. If that's the concept, then it's just a bland and mass-marketed advertisement, and there's nothing revolutionary about that. **Adam Parks**

Burn "Last Great Sea" (Revelation)—Being one of the biggest Burn fans I know of, I could not have been any more excited for the release of *Last Great Sea*. I mean, I have only been waiting a decade, right? I was not disappointed. The three new jams we are given are truly fantastic. The song writing is stellar as usual, complete with Burn's unique, yet sensible song structures. The relaxed, passive-aggressive guitar work is as beautiful and inspiring as it ever had been. The only aspect of this unearthened gem that left me somewhat unsatisfied initially was vocalist Chaka's lack of over the top aggression and growl—his is one of the greatest growls ever. The vocals here are certainly aggressive and appealing, but it is a distinct departure from the angered glory of, "Here me, I'm calling out" as heard in "Godhead," found on their debut seven inch—which is not only one of the best records Revelation Records ever put out, but also one of the best hardcore/metal EP's of all time. Nonetheless, Chaka's rhythmic approach is, as always, fresh and

inimitable. A lot of crap has polluted your ears within the past few years. Burn may be your only hope for salvation. Pick *Last Great Sea* up immediately – oh, but don't stop there. Also pick up *Cleanse* on Equal Vision, and their self-titled record on Revelation. These releases are arguably some of the most important and influential ever released in our scene of hardcore and metal. Burn is as essential as their impact was crucial. Do not miss out. **Joe Vespa**

Cadillac Blindsides "These Liquid Lungs" (Fueled By Ramen)- I hope that you have seen this band live because rumor has it that they've broken up. That's right, Minneapolis' Cadillac Blindsides have called it kaput. Regardless of their current status, their drummer Rebecca rocked the house so well? Guitar players James and bassist Trent had that rock swagger-flail-and-sway thing down. And Zach's got that whole front guy in a band thing pretty much perfect. I'm sure they have just cause for disbanding, but it's too bad because this record really shows them maturing as a musical unit. It's not perfect, it's sometimes clumsy and inconsistent—but it's good like that. The first track, "Wielders of the Poison Pen," has hard driving inter-playing guitars and a pummeling, menacing rhythm with vocals that emulate a tougher Billy Joe of Green Day. The lyrics are hard-hitting, regretful and sometimes vengeful—rife with lessons that need to be learned. "Straitjacket Weather" is a sad song about the craziness felt with what sounds like a failed amicable split. The imperfections in vocal performance make it immensely endearing, as does their friendly head-bopping brand of punk. If you enjoy the pop within the punk, you will gobble this right up. **Celeste Tabora**

Cave In "Tides of Tomorrow" (Hydra Head) EP- By now everyone is aware that the balls-to-the-wall, metal-hammer Cave In of old has been replaced by a kinder, gentler, more spaced-out Cave In. The bad news for all those who long for the past is that the old Cave In ain't coming back (and didn't they used to be Cave-In with a hyphen as well?). Sure, pretty much every note this band has ever uttered has been lauded by the same critics and fans who claim to love *Ok Computer* by Radiohead, but what no one, until now, has had the courage to claim is that Cave In on record these days is a bit boring (live they're a different story). Sure they're pushing the envelope with what can be done with a guitar and all that good stuff, but would you really want to listen to *Jupiter* at a party? A barbeque? While on a road-trip? I wouldn't. As a matter of fact, I find this about as warm and fuzzy as an Emerson, Lake, and Palmer song at its most progressive. Very good stuff here, sure, just a bit too complex to fall asleep to and too sterile for sex music. Food for thought. **Ross Siegel**

Christiansen "Forensics Brothers and Sisters!" (Revelation)- Wow, it's incredible how badly this band wants to be At The Drive-in. I can see the flyer up in the record store now: "Singer who sounds exactly like Cedric Belfrage of At The Drive-in [although not as urgent-sounding] looking for guitarists to complete line-up. Only serious musicians should apply. Influences include At The Drive-in." I find it hard to believe that when this Louisville, KY band laid down these tracks they didn't look at each other uneasily thinking, "Fuck, people are going to think we tried to rip-off At The Drive-in's sound right down to the gain-levels on our amplifiers and the amount of high-end we used on our bass amp." As a matter of fact, I wonder if the A&R guy at Revelation who signed them thought to himself: "Wow, I am going to get a huge raise after the boys at the office hear this. Just think, I discovered a band that borrows one of the most exciting sounds of the late '90s, and I did it without even having to go out on a limb and sign a band doing something new and different." Nuff said? **Ross Siegel**

The Crush "Here Is Where I Cross My Fingers" (Adeline)- The people who run Adeline Records clearly love the Minneapolis scene—they've released material by Dillinger 4 and Lifter Puller—so it makes sense that The Crush would be on Adeline. Musically The Crush draw equally from Dillinger 4, the late Cadillac Blindsides, and Jawbreaker. As a matter of fact, most of the songs on this album draw a little bit too much from *Bivouac*-era Jawbreaker and *Read the Book*-era Cadillac Blindsides for their own good. Nonetheless, The Crush have churned out an uplifting, raw, and impassioned performance with this record. The Crush play catchy punk rock that brings to mind Lookout Records circa 1993—a very good punk rock vintage indeed. **Ross Siegel**

Dag Nasty "Minority of One" (Revelation Records)- Dag Nasty had their heyday in what, 86? 87? I am not all that familiar with them to be honest. My introduction to the band was by the two punker girls I wanted to sleep with in the drama club. They sure loved Dag Nasty, while I was more into Slayer and Corrosion of Conformity. This, coupled with my long and unkempt hair, is most likely why I never had even the remotest shot with either of them. If they could only see me now, here with a clean cut hairdo, a T-shirt

that fits, and me (of all people) about to give Dag Nasty a great review. Catherine? Constance? Damn us late bloomers! I own what would most consider Dag Nasty's classic release, *Can I Say*. I imagine *Can I Say* is one of those had-to-be-there CD's. One of those albums you hear while in your early teens that grows up with you. It's like a best friend whose faults you accept and even appreciate. Quite similar to how I feel about Slayer's *Hell Awaits*. I highly doubt many people hearing *Hell Awaits* for the first time in their 20's are going to latch on to it as I did when I was 13. See where I am going? The point?

1) Music is subjective and is typically only as good as the impact it had on you or the memories it invokes.

2) As bands grow and learn as musicians, they simply write better material. Dag Nasty for one example. A bad example would be Slayer, for it is my opinion after Seasons in the Abyss it went down hill.

3) Making a reference to Slayer, much less *Hell Awaits*, in a Dag Nasty review is really cool.

I heard *Minority of One* and it made an impact. It is a mature punk rock album that is far superior to that of most its contemporaries. With the right amount of melody, pace, and aggression, this record shines brighter than the band's so-called classic albums. Older fans should be refreshed by the progression and maturity, and newcomers will undoubtedly latch on quickly and associate fond memories of today with *Minority of One* ten years from now. Welcome back, fellas. **Joe Vespa**

The Damn Personals "Standing Still In The USA" (Big Wheel Recreation)- The second album from this Boston act sounds a lot better than the last, which lost the powerful sound this band is capable of due to weak production. The Damn Personals play tough indie rock with a 70's power-pop informed edge, well supplied by Ken Cook's strong vocal range. The man makes a high-end falsetto work almost anywhere. Lots of good hard guitar lines by Ant Rossomando here make this as catchy as it is interesting to listen to. It's a very engaging record, which has lots of balance between the more quiet moments and the all-out rockers. A more barroom version of the underrated Chisel, this ensemble seems to bring the most out of Cook's strong signature songwriting. This is a very rollicking good time, the songs here have a staying power that almost equals the clean, clear crunchy sound that this band has finally mastered in recording. From here, I don't know what would be next for this group, but A&R men are probably buying drinks as we speak. A great record, you know what to do. **dup**

Day Of Less "Ad Hoc" (Rise)- This is a perfect example of a decent surprise in a stack of new discs. Day Of Less start off here with hard choppy yelling which leads into softly played emo rock. It's a nice little play of opposites here as the band plays hard over mellow sung emo vocals and switches off to quiet playing with hardcore vocals. Get it? Texture dynamics, musical heat sink, whatever you want to call it, there's a decent sense of balance here. And it flows quite well also, without the often overwrought quick time changes and crescendos in this type of style. If there's a sense of catchiness here, it's from the gentle builds of the songs and not from deliberate 'hooks'. Whoever decided that the idea of musical 'hooks' should be common consciousness for the casual music fan should be slapped with a closed hand. If the magic is there, the magic is there. The amount of crunchy guitar is acutely balanced to the sound here, as their sense of subtlety heavily governs how they write songs. Good 2-part harmonies here, with quite a bit of post-hardcore framework. If you're like me and too much emo is as boring as too much chaotic screaming, this quick 8-tracker does the job. I haven't heard such emo-tinged stuff that I've enjoyed in quite a long time. Ok, wait, to tell you the truth, I love chaotic screaming. This is still a damn good disc. **dup**

Dead To Fall "Everything I Touch Falls to Pieces" (Victory)- What would be fair to say about this record? It is really tough to review a CD you aren't into by a band that seems to be putting a lot of love and heart into their music. Do you insult it by saying their material is amateur? Do you inform the music-buying public it is derivative of all the current trends in hardcore and metal today, albeit not executed as well. It's a tough call. I have played in bands before. I know how it feels to give something your all and have it thrown back in your face. To be blunt, it plain sucks—especially when all you want to do is to create music that people can relate to and enjoy. Your intentions are sincere and you are a nice kid, to boot. I mean, all I wanted was to sing and dance with everyone and make people happy. Why can't a reviewer note the positive aspects of a CD, and impartially offer his opinion in a mature and delicate manner instead of just trashing and ripping my hard work apart with spite and malice as if I deliberately wrote a CD he would dislike on purpose? Fuck you all! Well, I am not ripping Dead To Fall

apart, per se, however, this CD, although coming across truthfully and sincerely, does sound like a young effort, and it offers little to a learned lover of metal. I would say this is a must for a younger audience of the genre of metalcore. Those more discerning will attest that this is a pale imitation of the bands whose music inspired Dead To Fall. It hurts me to say that. Again, to the CD's credit, it has a lot of heart. Unfortunately, sometimes that just isn't enough. **Joe Vespa**

De La Hoya "Wipe The Slate Clean, Now Let's Begin" (BD) EP- A five-track release from this seemingly quick-burning NYC act. Their last album was excellent but it seems that this disc is their final work under this name. The new project from these guys goes under the superb name Nakatomi Plaza. But these tracks exhibit more of the riveting mid-tempo punk rock that these guys did so well that I'm irritated that I never saw them live. Of special note is the sharp satire of "Consumer Confidence" where product placement gets a good working over. Well played, and well thought out punk with a lot of catchiness. De La Hoya did what they did very well and made sure that a hint of melody never came before a strong and progressive message. Interesting note- mastered by heavy metal stalwart Alex Perillas at Pyramid Sound in Ithaca. **dup**

Desert City Soundtrack "Contents of Distraction" (Deep Elm)- Some of you may remember DCS's singer and guitarist, Matt Carillo, from his work in Bay Area emo pioneers, Edaline, which Law of Inertia Records had the privilege of working with a few years back. What was striking about Edaline was the way Carillo managed to meld flawless guitar virtuosity with blitzkrieg drumming and dreamy/screamy vocals to a beautiful end (and if you can find the Edaline CD, it remains arguably the best work Law of Inertia ever released). Here, Carillo takes elements of the emotional textures that he created in projects like Edaline, and, even before that, Kid Dynamo (emo before emo was anywhere near cool), and mixes them with a blatant admiration for The Blackheart Procession. All told, the music is dreamy—helped by a potent dose of keyboards and pianos—and eerie. I would say that fans of Blackheart or any of the emotional punk coming out of the Bay Area in the early-to-mid-'90s should definitely check out this 7 song EP. It's not bad at all. Even though the band clearly needs to get out and play a bit more before they make it to the big time, I expect good things from these guys and girls in the future. Not bad. **Ross Siegel**

Digger "Keystone" (Hopeless)- I've always liked Digger more than their pop punk peers. While not groundbreaking in any respect, they have a remarkable knack for arrangement, especially in the vocal department. That's why I was kind of disappointed with their latest release. I think that there have been some personnel changes, because the second vocalist who brought so much character to *Monte Carlo* has mysteriously disappeared, making the songs sound somewhat vacant. Yes, the song "Try and Catch Me" is almost perfect, but combined with ten throwaway tracks that doesn't mean shit. **Jonah Bayer**

Dillinger Escape Plan "Irony is a Dead Scene" (Epitaph)- For all those who wrote off Dillinger Escape Plan as soon as their star began to shine as one of the most brutally intense metalcore bands in America as being all technique and no heart, this four song collaboration with Mike Patton (best known for being the mouthpiece of Faith No More and The Fantomas), should change your opinion. Not only are these songs some of the most interesting and jaw-droppingly complex songs ever to grace the metal genre, but Mr. Patton's vocals are far and away stranger and more creative than anything else to grace the metal genre. He screams, sings, whispers, and chants his way all over this disc. It's just an EP, but this is one of the few that I'd recommend you go out of your way to find. Breathtaking. **Ross Siegel**

Dillinger 4 "Situationist Comedy" (Fat)- It's a shame that Dillinger 4's lyrics don't reflect their song titles because "A Floater Left With Pleasure in the Executive Washroom" and "The Father, The Son, and the Homosexual/Single Parent" would make for excellent choruses. The new D4 album picks up where the last one left off, 13 more tracks of punky power pop a la NOFX having intimate relations with the Partisans (what an awful mental image). I've got to respect a band who tours only when they damn well feel like it, put out albums at an even slower rate, and still manage to retain a loyal fan base and sizeable underground buzz. I also have respect for any band that can make a serious song out of any of the above mentioned titles. In a perfect world this is what pop punk would sound like, forget all those bands out there right now using every pseudo-introspective sentence fragment they can think of for a name and singing more effeminate than a unich, this is the real shit. The music is all at once abrasive, fast paced and has more hooks

then a fishing tackle box. Aaron Lefkove

Division Of Laura Lee "Black City" (Burning Heart/Epitaph)- I've said it before—the distro deal that Epitaph has with Sweden's Burning Heart is a *huge* strong point of their roster. This comes with a glowing review from Kerrang! on the cover and a pretty good analysis from me as well. This is dark, sparse garage rock with an almost Velvets-style sound. The tense mid-tempo vibe here creates a certain edginess that you either love or hate. Either way, it's cool that a certain sense of drama has made a resurgence in rock and roll. DOLL has a certain palpable feeling of recklessness that seems like it would fit much better in a smoky bar, or murky drug den. This is the type of music that directors would find most useful in a soundtrack scene where someone is going out of their mind, shooting up, or destroying stuff. Hell, it sounds great but this album is not really as singles-based as it is one long cheap-thrills, out-of-breath mood. A keeper for those situations when nothing else fits. **dup**

Divit "Broadcaster" (Nitro)- This is the type of music I'd expect to hear blaring out of the back of some soccer mom's Dodge Caravan. There's not a tempo change anywhere to be found and the singer sounds like he's having as much fun as having his toenails removed with a pair of rusty pliers. C'mon guy, sing it like you mean it! KROQ should eat this up. **Aaron Lefkove**

Down By Law "Punkrockdays / The Best of DBL" (Epitaph)- Although there's a certain K-Tel "as seen on TV" weariness in the fact that Down By Law has a *Best Of* out, this is pretty cut and dry. I'm gonna look bad here, because I've certainly had the praises of this band sung to me by many people. Yet somehow I'd only acquired a copy of their first album and never got too into it. Well, I suppose you can see where this review is going... blah blah blah, perfect sampler... good overview of this prolific band, etc. The way I see it, it's important to see singer Dave Smalley as one of the greats of punk and hardcore (not to mention someone well versed in middle-eastern politics). My problem, and I can only suppose that others are also like this, is that I constantly focus too heavily on one or 2 of the acts that he's been in. When I was a much younger, I loved the Taang! reissues of DYS—goofy, over-the-top Boston straight edge. Somewhere between "Can I Say," Dag Nasty's immortal debut album, and the first 2 releases by All, Dave Smalley got stuck in the amber of my musical consciousness. Can you really blame me? Songs like All's "Sugar And Spice" and Dag Nasty's "Under Your Influence" are some of the best songs ever laid down in this paradigm. There's really no question about Smalley's complete importance in the evolution of melody in hardcore music. After all the early stuff, this sampler shows that his work was going into a certain direction. Like Bob Mould, Smalley took his gnarled hardcore roots and infused a maddeningly precise sense of power-pop songwriting. All tracks chosen by the fans, good liner notes by Smalley and Sam Williams. There's an okay cover of the Proclaimers' "500 Miles", but the recently recorded version of Big Country's "In A Big Country" is outstanding. Yeah, that's right—OUTSTANDING. Grab this if you don't already got these tracks. **dup**

Ed Gein (Hex)- I don't get very excited about much hardcore these days. More often than not, I'm able to discern a record's sound based solely on the cover art or, what's worse, the record label. This record is different. I'm not sure how, because it has all the elements of every played-out hardcore band available; chugs, screamy vocals, speed, math, horror movie samples, the whole nine. But I am listening to it and I'm thinking "Whoa" and "Awesome". I guess the one thing that *really* stands out and sets this record apart is the dynamic of both tempo and texture. You know how when you listen to Dillinger Escape Plan, it's like, "Yeah dude. Sweet mathematical action!" But after a while, it starts to sound a little homogenous? Each of Ed Gein's songs takes you through a torturous few minutes, raking you over all the complexity of Converge's "Saddest Day" compressed at a ratio of about 40%, without once relenting to any kind of melodic breakdown or sappy spoken monologues. In short, it's anything but homogenous, but aims always to drive itself further and further into your chest. A little work on the production and this record could be your new fave. **Adam Parks**

EE "For 100 We Try Harder" (Asian Man)- Asian Man is a slight build from the East, barely able to see and stoic as a cat. Apart from that, it is strange to find an indie rock band whose influences seem to include the Smashing Pumpkins. EE sends out melodic alternative rock tunes, largely instrumental, with few vocalized tracks. Overall, mid-tempo cut-that-little-child straining eked out along an airy waveform. A floating guitar and a quiet percussion hit, hit, hitting out pretty little tunes. This band is worth an ear if these descriptions give you joy. **Adam Parks**

Enon "High Society" (Touch And Go)- Yeah! Sign me up! Enon understand what I crave—style, sophistication, with a touch of pushing the boundaries and expectations placed upon those who consider themselves a part of independent music. They are definitely part of the high society in the cosmopolitan city known as Indie Rock. Practically perfect pauses and palatably timely bass lines mixed with subtle and, more importantly, unimposing keyboards are found on this release. They realize when less is more, but they also know when the song calls for more sensationalism. Opening song, "Old Dominion," is perfect to prance around before that hip party to get your rockstar self ready. This seriously rocking song owns convincingly performed vocals, powerful pauses in-between take-charge guitars and devastating bass lines. "In This City" is more subtle, Toko's soft-spoken voice drives the song through music's cruise-only zone, with synthesizers riding shotgun and a catchy drum beat in the backseat. "Sold" rides along the same lines, sounding sleek and slinky—a soundtrack to your entrance into a chic crowd. While "Pleasure And Privilege" sounds choppy and crazy like the more maniacal Dismemberment Plan or, obviously, like Brainiac. Enon makes music that is the essence of cool. The band took a newer direction with this release, becoming more straight-forward—giving a new and positive light to that term by showing the music world that simplicity doesn't have to mean stupidity. **Celeste Tabora**

Eyes Adrift (Spin Art)- It is now clear to me why the Meat Puppets never lived up to the hype of the grunge years. I also totally understand why while we know what happened to two of the three members of Nirvana, sometimes we sit back and think, "what the hell ever happened to Krist [the band's bassist] from Nirvana and Bud [drummer] of Sublime?" After listening to this record—and the amalgam of country, blue-grass, and space-rock—you too will be in the know. You'll wish you weren't. **Ross Siegel**

Fairweather "Alaska" (Equal Vision) EP- If you're planning on picking this up this CD because you really liked their last album, you might want to take a listen to a friend's first. I'll admit to liking *If They Move...Kill Them* even with the Faulkner quote and horrible title, but *Alaska* is simply not at the same musical plateau. The tempos are slower and the long instrumental interludes which appear in all of the songs, aren't complex or interesting enough to really keep your attention. It sounds like they decided that they were going to stop copying Saves The Day and start copying Thursday. There really is a lot of talent in this band but they still haven't really found a sound of their own. I also think that there may be some really intense emo lyricism on this album but there were no lyrics in the notes, just two a couple of blank white pages and two blank purple pages taking up space in the jewel case. There's no doubt that this record will appeal to those who like artsy rock with intentionally whiney vocals and pseudo-complex rhythms. This album just didn't leave me humming the tunes or singing the lyrics like the last one. **Stan Horaczek**

Friction "Hours of Operation - Discography 1991-1994" (Polyvinyl)- It's a little too easy to focus this entire review around Bob Nanna of Hey Mercedes/Braid and his involvement in this band (he sang, wrote lyrics, and played drums). It's difficult to listen to this without Braid constantly coming to mind. As I sit by myself listening to this, I keep forgetting that I'm listening to a band called Friction, a band that came before Braid and before Hey Mercedes. Ideally, this would be so good that I would forget all about those bands, but it's too similar for me to make that separation. The simple fact is that anyone who ever liked any of Nanna's bands at all should get this. Two discs full of good songs, complete with erratic drumming, punchy guitars, and Nanna's distinct vocals. And if you have not heard Braid yet, this would probably be a good starting point for you. I have nothing bad to say about this, so there you go. **Tyler Bussey**

Fury "Resurrection" (Jade Tree) EP- Why does it seem that the only way I'd be handed off a Jade Tree disc is when it's a reissue of older material? As if the powers that be at Law of Inertia would ever hand the high profile stuff to my plebian reviewer position. Ah well. This was recorded in 1989 and released as a 7" on THD records (some 5-minute affair that also released Swiz material). 6 tracks from Shawn Brown from Swiz/Dag Nasty, Chris Thomson from Circus Lupus, Jason Farrell of Bluetip, and Alex Daniels of Sweetbelly Freakdown, this is an all-star effort by people who weren't stars at the time. The liner notes are filled with testimonials about the need at the time to create a more aggressive hardcore vibe in the DC scene. One of the best lines has to be this gem from Shawn: "Emo was being born and I hated it." This has the arsy residue of

the DC sound, but it's definitely made to sound like the band's name. Variable-tempo hardcore with strong basslines and drumming that almost remind me of Inside Out (the West coast one). Apparently this was a self-serving hardcore backlash that was done at the end of the recording session for Swiz's *Hell Yes I Cheated* album. And I thought the story behind Egg Hunt was fascinating. **dup**

Gatsbys American Dream "Why We Fight" (Rocketstar)- Now here's a surprise: A record label I've never heard of from someplace called Redondo, WA teams up with a band of high-schoolers (judging from the high-pitched whine of their singer) who are pretty damn good musicians. Style-wise they're doing nothing new, but nothing unhip either. Right now that mix of super fast palm-muted guitars, whiney vocals over screamed choruses, and hooks a plenty is about as in vogue right now as the faux-hawk hairstyle was about a year ago. But Gatsbys American Dream (which would be a damn cool band name had them remembered to put apostrophize Gatsby's) have a kind of earnestness and eagerness that kindred spirits like Thrive, Glassteater, and the Movielife seem to lack. Nonetheless, this band as some work to do before Drive-Thru comes knocking at their door. Many of their songs lack a coherent core structure that would hold them together as well as they deserve. The whole album shows promise, but other than the phenomenal "Where Shadows Lie," I don't see anything that merits a spot on the main stage at the Warped tour. **Ross Siegel**

GBH "Ha Ha" (Go-kart)- Having not listened to any GBH since the *Punk Junkies* album (which I'd have to consider not very memorable), my first glimpse of this disc simply reminded me of the day when I first borrowed a copy of GBH's *The Clay Years* in middle school. I don't really know much about the post-1985 material of the band, besides hearing that it was very much thrash metal. But their early material, man, that's still some of my favorite hard punk ever. Considering that Go-kart did very well with the Buzzcocks' return to form, I went into this album with an open mind—it wasn't easy since the cover art is downright pathetic. It takes a few tracks into this until the band seems to relax (or I relax with the band perhaps) and then the songs take root—the production is still thick, the vibe aggressive and the band tight and speedy. While they're a little more melodic, tracks like "Crush 'Em" and "The Unexpected" have the metallic fury that these guys made their trademark 20 years ago. It's hard not to like Colin's resilient rasp, which sounds the same as it did when it graced tracks like "Sick Boy" and "City Baby Attacked By Rats". The songs are more spread out, since I'm sure that after such a long time it's hard to find exactly what niche you're occupying, but the good songs are here. And a new album pretty much means that they'll be touring, which is what really matters. If you really like GBH, this is pretty good. I'd have to stick with *The Clay Years* for the definitive document, although the concept of thrash by GBH seems pretty good too. **dup**

Get Up Kids "On A Wire" (Vagrant)- If a band changes their sound so drastically that they sound like a completely different band, should they change the name? Get Up Kids probably were faced with this issue. They sound so different from how they did a mere five years ago. They still sound emotional, but in a more subdued, mature, and medicated fashion. From the quintessential emo band to sounding kind of alt-country, like in "Overdue." As I hear the words "the only hope I have is to let go," I think to myself, the only hope I do have is to let go. Let go of my adolescent fondness of a Get Up Kids past. These boys are headed for the soft core. The soft and tender elements that were the driving force behind some of their aggressive tracks have become the driving force on the surface level of all their songs! So okay people, indeed this doesn't sound horrible. It's not even unbearable. But when a band projected authentic passion and then they spend the rest of their career becoming more limp and lifeless with each album—it just becomes unconvincing. Let's remove ourselves from any past knowledge of the band. I still think this is a mediocre release. Some credit: "Grunge Pig" is the one song worth a spin in the player. **Celeste Tabora**

Girls Against Boys "You Can't Fight What You Can't See" (Jade Tree)- The band is in their 12th year of existence and they've practically been a staple and reference point for rockers the world 'round. They've gone from indie labels like Touch And Go to a major, Geffen, and back to indie with Jade Tree. Aside from hearing that this band can really throw a party, you also may have heard how good they are at writing dark, sensual, hip-swiveling rock ditties. Beware: this disc may cause addiction to those with a susceptibility to rock and roll. There is something seductive about the sexy bad boy way Girls vs. Boys perform these rock-a-rama songs. I've circled this disc quite a few times, and though this would usually be a little too polished for my taste, there is an aural allure that lures you into the layers of sounds the disc omits. You start really feeling it into the second track, "All The Rage," and it won't let go of you even after

the last track, "Let it Breathe," it might cause you to cave in and just keep the record on repeat. Best heard while drag racing a muscle car against a dead rock star. **Celeste Tabora**

Glasseater (Fearless)- I feel like every issue, at some point I end up ranting about how every punk record sounds the same and how disillusioned I am with the lack of deviation in our little corner of the musical map. Then a band like Glasseater comes along and, while they're not doing anything incredibly groundbreaking, reminds me that every punk band doesn't have to re-invent the genre. To break up the pop-punk monotony, Glasseater have some dude who does a hardcore scream in the background of their infectious melodic punk songs, and while I give them props for trying something different, it just doesn't work. Seriously bro, stop. But aside from that, the band seems to have a knack for pushing the limits of an oft stale genre. I just wish we could say the same for most of their contemporaries. **Jonah Bayer**

Hayden "Live at Convocation Hall" (Badman)- Honestly? I'm not one that's fond of live albums. Even if I was part of the audience, nostalgia hardly makes for a good excuse to endure the sloppiness of a live album compared to its studio recording and frankly, I find the audience applause indulgent and annoying. So, from experience I stay away from live recordings. But, there are exceptions to the rule. Like this Hayden double disc release that was recorded in Canada's University of Toronto's Convocation Hall in March of 2002. It's done so tastefully— if they could omit the audience participation it would pass for a great studio album in my book. Even Hayden's pre-song banter is charming. The soulful and tender manner in which each song is performed makes me want to applaud right with the audience. Steve Buscemi's collaboration with Hayden is featured on this album, and Julie Dorion sings on a track too! Are you finding yourself in the mood for some "slowcore"? Accept Hayden into your collection! **Celeste Tabora**

Hellacopters "Cream of the Crap Vol. 1" (Gearhead Records)- From the frozen icy northern Valhalla land that brought us Volvo and Black Metal comes the Hellacopters. Nestled somewhere between the Doors-inspired proto punk riffing of Radio Birdman and Turbonegro, these Swedish motherfuckers rock you harder than a homecoming queen in the boys locker room. Nothing new here, but rather this is volume one of a two volume set of tunes previously available on various 7 inches, compilations and split EP's. I'm not sure what it is about the Nordic countries, but they seem to produce some of the most straight up hard rocking bands I've ever heard. Stand any track on this CD up against the Strokes or any other "rock" band. It'll blow it away. It'll rip it apart. It'll impale it on a stake, drink the blood, and then plunder & pillage it's home. I bet these guys brew and drink mead. The singer is also the drummer for Swedish death metal legends Entombed. That's pretty evil. Hail Odin! **Aaron Lefkove**

The Hope Conspiracy "Endnote" (Equal Vision)- I have seen The Hope Conspiracy a number of times, and I have all their releases to date. I am not a big fan. Not that I dislike THC, they're just nothing to write home about — then again, is anything really worth writing home about? That's something to consider. Hmm... But I digress. *Endnote*: Here we have 12 new tracks clocking in at about 26 and one half minutes, and these 12 new tracks blaze. Titled this album "Highnote" would have been appropriate as this is precisely that; without a doubt. The mid to fast paced hardcore palette (Unbroken-esque, a fair assessment) is as effective as mid to fast paced hardcore can be, which in my opinion is not very, however, the vocals bring the highest level of effectiveness possible. Yes, I would say *Endnote*'s stand out characteristic is the vocals. They are pissed. Amen. *Endnote* is a hardcore album— an excellent hardcore album at that. If you enjoy THC's brand of Hardcore, you shant be disappointed, as *Endnote* is their finest release thus far. Undoubtedly. *Endnote* (forgive me): The choice and placement of the sample from the movie *Falling Down* in the song "Fallen" is nothing short of brilliant. Definitely economically viable. **Joe Vespa**

Hopesfall "The Satellite Years" (Trustkill)- Three years ago, when all Trustkill had to speak of on their label was Brother's Keeper and Harvest, who would have thought they would turn into the powerhouse they are today. While maintaining the highest quality standards— to the point of only releasing a hand full of records a year— this label has become synonymous with the vanguard of aggressive rock. And Hopesfall add no blemishes to Trustkill's record. While I could do without the underlying we-love-God theme revealed in their thanks list, the music ranges from beautiful, aggressive shoe-gazerish rock to screamy hardcore along the lines of another Trustkill great, Poison the Well. Although the record tends toward the scatterbrained side, never quite settling on one style of mood, the listener quickly forgives the band for the six-minute-plus

tune entitled "Escape Pod of Intangibles" which revolves around one half-spoken, half-sung vocal line. This is a gorgeous hardcore record... if there is such a thing. Chalk this up as another hit. **Ross Siegel**

Hot Snakes "Suicide Invoice" (Swami)- This is a band that I just can't get as psyched about as most people. I guess the big deal is that Speedo from Rocket from the Crypt is a member of this ensemble, and everything he touches turns to gold. Hot Snakes has the very "in" dirty garage rock idea working out, but with a darkness that, in my opinion, hoists them above most other bands cranking out that sound. With a slightly less poppy and more arty approach to lyric writing, and more thoughtful guitar riffs, *Suicide Invoice* is about 70% more likely to move me than most of the other "garage" bullshit that I have heard. I really like Rocket from the Crypt, though. **Adam Parks**

Hot Water Music "Caution" (Epitaph)- I remember reading once that these guys think the reason they've got so many records out is that they're dumb enough to record every song they write. I couldn't disagree with that statement more. I'm more grateful for the fact that these guys put out so many records and tour as much as they do than you can imagine— their music has been supported me through the best and worst of times, and I'm grateful for it. This new album is no exception. I think that what determines which album you will like most, if you like them at all, is which one you heard first. I started listening to the band when *No Division* came out, and the first songs I ever heard were off the split with Leatherface. So I've got a bigger place in my heart for the recent stuff than the kids that won't shut up about how they started to suck, lost the passion, and sold out after *Forever And Counting*. But I digress. Musically, this record has a lot more depth to it than the last one did. The guitars are more layered and complex, and, as always, the rhythm section couldn't get the praise they deserve in this review. Right now I'd kill for a lyric sheet so I could sing along. To me, this band was always amazing and above and beyond what everyone else was doing because of how powerful the lyrics and vocals were, how down-to-earth and approachable they are as people, and how easy it is to identify with the songs. Just from listening, I can tell that recording this was a cathartic experience. Chuck's shouts give me chills, and Chris sounds as passionate about what he does as ever. In the end, it's still Hot Water Music. It's still the same four friends writing songs together. I wouldn't have it any other way. **Tyler Bussey**

In Pieces "Learning to Accept Silence" (Escape Artist)- Even though their album title is a bit too similar to Glassjaw's debut to be safe, *In Pieces* come out of the gate with surprising power in the Taking Back Sunday-esque, "The Anchor." Unfortunately they drop off rather steeply upon the transition to the second song. Tight, technical hardcore that draws as much from Long Island as it does from SoCal bands like Thrice. As a matter of fact, *In Pieces* could be an updated Silent Majority with ease, except that Silent Majority did this five years ago with more unique results. *In Pieces* is good, very good, but they blend into the pack of other bands doing the exact same thing a bit too much for comfort. I'm interested to hear their next release, where hopefully they will make use of their obvious talent and get a bit more experimental— and maybe try breaking some rules for a change. **Ross Siegel**

Isis "Oceanic" (Ipecac)- Ever since I saw Isis open for The Dillinger Escape Plan a few years back— and was converted from an unbeliever— I've been telling anyone who will listen how amazing Isis are. I am so convinced that Isis' epic soundscapes are true pieces of heavy metal virtuosity that when a friend of mine told me he thought they sucked I wanted to throttle him... before playing him my complete Isis collection so as to make him a convert as well. Isis' songs are so brilliantly dynamic that its almost trivializing them to label the band a metal outfit. Sure they fit more readily into the asinine label of "stoner rock" more than what is commonly thought of as metal, but the fact is that this band covers so many moods and textures through the course of a single song, that one can call them anything they want except for boring. Combine the drumming of Led Zeppelin's John Bonham, the guitar playing of Neurosis at their most stoic, and the screams of that dude from Godflesh, and we're getting near Isis territory. Every Isis record is a journey, and one might say that in the short time Isis has been together their entire discography is a progression through the depths of the seamy metal underworld. I just say this is the perfect record for which to have sex, sleep, or kill... and how many bands can you pin that trifecta on? **Ross Siegel**

Jets to Brazil "Perfection Loneliness" (Jade Tree)- Blake Schwarzenbach is a confusing guy. The first Jets to Brazil disc was a saccharine punk record that was decent, but from a songwriting

perspective, it wasn't as on par with any of the records he made with Jawbreaker. Then, it was time for Plan B: Blake started playing piano, smoked lots of cigarettes, listened to lots of Wilco and wrote *Four Corned Night*, which, while earnest and occasionally even brilliant, had more throwaway songs than a CMJ compilation. For *Perfecting Loneliness*, he quit smoking, got better at playing the keys and finally got it right, mostly. For example, the album's third song, "Cat Heaven," is a beautiful piano ballad with a melody that lends itself to Blake's goose-bump inducing inflection and lines like "In the long black eternity/ I loved you so perfectly/ In the words of clouds/ like a bird sings to his flowers and I was heard" don't sound cheesy, they sound perfect. The rest of the album flirts between distortion-drenched guitars and somber acoustics, but the band is able to execute these differing dynamics so masterfully that you don't really notice the shift. Let's face it, Blake Schwarzenbach ain't no Jeff Tweedy (which, deep down, is what I think he wants to be), but he is our poor man's punk version of Jeff; and we need him. Like Blake's other albums, *Perfecting Loneliness* is hit-or-miss, but now, even the misses are starting to sound right. **Jonah Bayer**

Junction 18 "Heroes From The Future" (Fearless)- What's in a name? Sum 41? Blink-182? Apparently you have to have those pop-punk riffs and harmonized vocals with effects to have a band name like theirs. (You know what I'm talking about — the "word" followed by at least a double-digit "number"? "The Weight" sounds like "More Than A Feeling"; but "Life Is A Racetrack" sounds completely generic. But if I was forced to choose, I would probably choose Junction 18 over the two bands mentioned above. They sound sweet and a little more thought-out than what we've come to expect of pop-punk. As for the genre though, I think it's had it's run, — these bands are running out of originals ways of expressing themselves! Just give this disc a listen! **Celeste Tabora**

The June Spirit "Testing Superstition" (Negative Progression)- Believe it or not I could have been in the same position Negative Progression in which now finds itself by releasing this second-rate power-pop band. You see, The June Spirit sent me demos of the songs that would eventually become their debut EP. I told them, "I'll call you, don't call me," in response to the prospect of releasing that record. I never called them apparently Negative Progression did. Well the June Spirit, and their "professionally trained vocalist," Ian Musgrove, play what is commonly referred to as (MTV flavored) emo. They wish they were as good as Brand New, Thursday, or Taking Back Sunday. Instead they're vying for the spot right behind The Juliana Theory, if you get my drift. **Ross Siegel**

Kaia "Oregon" (Mr. Lady)- A ten track ode to the great Northwest state of Oregon, this CD is refreshingly genuine in its pastoral folk qualities. It's recorded and produced modestly, forwarded by acoustic guitar and highlighted by some keyboard, percussion and lap steel parts. The voice carries sweet, if mildly pained, melodies throughout the record, and the songs adopt a singable, pop-sensible feel without losing the honesty in their composition. Most of the lyrical content is illustrative of personal experience, trials and, keeping with the theme of the album art, nostalgia. People and dates make cameos as characters in what ultimately become bits of true stories offered in song. **Adam Parks**

Keepsake "Black Dress in a B Movie" (Fearless)- Like many bands from CA, Keepsake probably have really nice tans and possibly surfboards. Despite that, the first few measures of this record are the whole album. I was joking around with a few friends and started to foreshadow the upcoming lyrics. My song went like this... "I saw you at the show yesterday / I didn't know what to say / blah blah" As it turned out, this is pretty much all that Keepsake ended up having to say, as they are a below average pop-punk band. However, instead of cartoon pictures of high school couples, the soft-core porn cover of this record features a sprawled-out naked girl with a short bobbed haircut and the gaze of Jessica Rabbit. Pleeeeease Eddie, stop these kids from putting out more over-produced, under-conceived bullshit. **Adam Parks**

Killswitch Engage "Alive or Just Breathing" (Roadrunner)- All the message board posts I read lately have criticized KSE and dubbed them, this new album in particular, "mall metal." That's a bit harsh, and not entirely true, therefore I differ, but refuse to beg. Granted, there is more melodic singing than I particularly care for here, however, melodic singing does not "mallmetal" make. Is Helloween or King Diamond "mall metal"? I think not. Allow me to set the record straight. *Alive or Just Breathing* is undoubtedly a fantastic album. It is impeccably executed, and boasts sensible production that comfortably sits on the greenest edges of raw and polished, never extreme in either direction. As far as it's song's contents, my only complaint is not the melodic singing insomuch

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that it is *what* it is, moreover I question *why* it is. Sometimes I get the feeling these parts were inserted not for the sake of the song, but more for the sake of a catchy hook in hope of luring in an unsuspecting mainstreamer, regardless of whether it is what the song called for or not. Aside from that small gripe, the album kicks it solid with enough brutal vocals to keep a jaded metal dude such as myself listening, and the perfect amount of mosh to keep the pit fiends violent enough to scare Moms worldwide. Was Killswitch Engage trying to ensnare a newer, younger, and more mainstream audience? Perhaps. Does this make them sellouts, or "mall metal"? Not by a long shot. Definitely one of the ten best metal albums of the year. **Joe Vespa**

Knut "Challenger" (Hydra Head)- This is the second Hydra Head release for this Swiss quartet and it seems they have either adopted the requisite sound, or have taken over all the musical duties of labelmates Keelhaul. Seething chord progressions are the highlight of this record, and the highlights stop shortly thereafter. There are bits and pieces of new ideas, great energy and an excellent sense of flow from the beginning to end of each song. But coupled with those positives, there is also a lot of rehased material, particularly reminiscent of (as mentioned) other current Hydra Head bands. If you have an ear for detail, there might be a world of difference between Knut and their associates, but I don't pick it out. **Adam Parks**

Koufax "Social Life" (Vagrant)- Usually, seeing a band live can make a tepid record sound better. For example, I wasn't a big fan of Beck's *Sea Change* until I saw him perform the songs live and after the concert the songs seem to make more sense, like a layer has been peeled off and I could hear them the way Beck intended them to be heard. Koufax is the opposite. I actually kinda like the record but they were so awful when I saw them live that it makes it impossible for me to listen to *Social Life*. Prefacing every song with some one-liner like, "we're going to place a personal ad saying we're looking for young bodies with old souls" and repeatedly hitting himself in the head, I felt embarrassed for the band as they struggled through their set of organ-driven rock. If I could listen to the record, maybe even tell you to buy it, but for now my only advice is to make it a Blockbuster night the next time Koufax comes to your town. **Jonah Bayer**

The Lot Six "Gwylo" (Espo) EP- The Lot Six seem to be having some sort of a personality crisis: one part garage rock, one part Fugazi, one part mariachi band. At times I can't tell if this is a compilation or if this band just isn't contented with playing in one particular style for too long. I'm going to go with the latter. While every song on this EP has its own distinctive sound, and in some cases its own genre, the band does a hell of a job of trying to maintain somewhat of a cohesive feeling throughout. One could say that the band play mostly slow and drone-y yet melodic tunes, bringing in acoustic guitars, keyboards and brass at various times. On the other hand, you could also say that they play choppy post hardcore, with some soft parts. There's also a song that gets going then abruptly stops mid track. That's just flat out obnoxious. Not a terrible release, and definitely worth a second spin (I'm still not sure whether or not my copy is defective) but it leaves the listener a bit confused. **Aaron Lefkove**

The Lyndsay Diaries "The Tops of Trees Are on Fire" (Militia Group)- I don't claim to be very tough, and I'm sure as hell not a macho kind of guy. I don't have any Motorhead LPs, I don't drive a motorcycle, hell... I can't even drink more than a beer or two without getting quite tipsy. One thing is for certain though, if I found myself in mortal combat with Scott Windsor, the singer of the Lyndsay Diaries, over a girl or money or something I could effortlessly (and gladly) beat the shit out of him. While 16 year-old teeny-boppers may fall for the high-pitched lullabies sung by Mr. Windsor, all I can think about when listening to this CD is that someone in Orange County, CA is aiming to make a buck off the misguided Dashboard Confessional craze. **Ross Siegel**

Matt Skiba / Kevin Seconds (Asian Man Records)- You couldn't be further from the truth by assuming that this acoustic split will sound anything like Dashboard Confessional, even though it's all acoustic. This is an unlikely pairing, with Alkaline Trio's Matt Skiba making up the first half of the disc and Kevin Seconds, best known for singing in legendary Nevada hardcore band 7 Seconds, making up the second half. The songs Skiba wrote for this are not out of the ordinary by his standards, and sound quite similar to the few acoustic songs the Trio has recorded. Many of the strong points present in the Trio's music- the energy, angst, dark imagery, etc.- are absent from these songs, and the lack of complexity in Skiba's songwriting really shows. Kevin's side is unlike anything

I've heard from him before. Now, Kevin was never your typical hardcore vocalist, so I'm not entirely surprised that he'd go for something different. Still, he is definitely going to turn some heads with this, especially amongst those of us with together records like *The Crew* and *Walk Together, Rock Together*- while some will enjoy it, I'm willing to bet that most 7 Seconds fans won't know what to make of this at first. That's because "hardcore" is easily the last word you'd use to describe this. Catchy acoustic rock with an aging punk's outlook, I suppose. I'm just excited and happy to hear something unexpected from him, and to see that he has musical inclinations that go beyond playing what's he's been playing for over 20 years. This is recommended. **Tyler Bussey**

Maximilian Colby (Lovitt)- This album is just a recap on a devastatingly wonderful band from Virginia. One might argue they were ahead of their time. I wouldn't go as far as to claim that. But, coming from someone who was not apart of the Max Colby scene when it was happening, I can say that this band was imaginative and hard at play. It's not hardcore, not punk, not angry, and not cheesy. Max Colby presents a picture of expression. I sincerely believe that those who have listened experienced one example of art being brought back into music without being overly pretentious. There are tracks recorded from practices to studios in 1994 and '95. There are also very endearing liner notes from friends and supporters of Max Colby. It's never too late to discover a fondness for a band, so even if Max Colby's performing days are gone - you can still own this part of their musical journey. **Celeste Tabora**

MC Paul Barman "Paulelujah!" (Coup d'Etat Entertainment)- MC Paul Barman is so excited for himself. The opening track on his Prince Paul-produced album, "It's Here" shrieks, "Check it out man...the MC Paul Barman full length is finally out...I only had to wait 6 years, but it's here man." As if the exclamation point in the title didn't give it away. The Ivy League educated rapper brings a bohemian approach to his music, incorporating funk, folk, jazz and spoken word to highlight his creative rhymes, political awareness and teenage-like sex-drive. The most blatantly funny song is "Cock Mobster," rhyming what he'd like to do to famous female celebrities. For instance, to "Jizz early inside Liz Hurley," "Slip my slim sword in Kim Gordon" and he is a "braniac with a veiny sack resting on the brow of Erika Eleniak." Another uniquely intelligent feature of "Paulelujah" is the lyrical newspaper insert, "Jew Dork Rimes" featuring Barman's original artwork illustrating his songs. CD's and art in one package...behold! Just give yourself time alone for the first listen...Playing this album for a girl kind of reminds me of the time I took a date to see Todd Solondz's *Happiness*. No, I will not get into that here. **Adam Lindenbaum**

Mighty Mighty Bosstones "A Jackknife to a Swan" (Side One Dummy)- And just when you had written them off as another casualty of the ska boom of 1994 (alongside such musical luminaries as Less Than Jake, Reel Big Fish and Goldfinger) the Mighty Mighty Bosstones make their mighty return to an indie label. After years of being chewed up, ass raped, shit on and spit out of the major label system that had so much faith in them for that brief moment back when ska was considered cool, Dicky and the gang have come full circle to make what could be one of their strongest albums to date. Coining the term ska-core oh so many years ago, the Bosstones embraced a distinct sound that all at once went from progressive to cute and campy to just flat out obnoxious. You know the sound, clean upbeat guitars, overkill on the horns, a fast heavy chorus. Luckily this time around they've decided to change the formula up a bit. Where once upbeat two tone style ska was these guys' main focus, they seem to have embraced a more streamlined, straight ahead melodic punk rock sound, relying on the horns mainly for accenting the guitars rather than overpowering them. In the wake of a series of overly produced major label fiascos the Bosstones seem to have gotten back to their Boston punk roots, regrouped and reinvented themselves as a stand up rock band, and while I'm sure they still kick out all the jams from "Ska-Core, The Devil, and More" and "Don't Know How to Party" live, they sound like they've finally found a happy medium on a label where the pretenses of what a Bosstones album *should* sound like don't exist. **Aaron Lefkove**

Mike Felumlee "64 hours" (Double Zero)- Some people like to play it safe. They like to walk the straight and narrow, stay out of people's business, and be known as the nice guy or the good girl. Well, some musicians seem to write their music the same way. I bring this comparison up, naturally, because this album is safe. No ragged edges that can rub you the wrong way, no controversial content, no parental advisory sticker on the shrinkwrap. Trying to describe it as something you haven't heard before puts me in a cold sweat. It's radio-friendly, yet if you heard it I'm not sure any of these songs would hook into your memory. You've got guitars that walk on eggshells atop the rhythm of your regular pop formula. Felumlee

(who used to play in bands such as Alkaline Trio and Smoking Popes) just sings of your normal everyday love-and-life trials and tribulations with music that emotes his lyrical content. Each song is beautiful in their own right, they're just not memorable. If you're looking towards pretty semi-rock balladish pop songs, this is for you! **Celeste Tabora**

The Nationale Blue "A Different Kind Of Listening" (Iodine)- Well bite my tongue! There are bands with potential out there that people have failed to name drop, like this one, The Nationale Blue. I understand the idea that this Massachusetts band, are trying to convey. However, only time will tell where the band will find its niche. I for one prefer those tracks that are instrumental, which makes up about half, the remainder of the disc holds the regular rock standard of drums-bass-guitar-vocals. When the vocals do come into play, it sounds a little like Fugazi to me, take The drum parts are piquant and poignant, though the swirling guitar parts sometimes sound like they have a little catching up to the refined level of the percussive prowess. I really enjoyed the time I spent listening to "Focus In Six" because of its interesting guitar parts that made for a studious listen, even if it's a little too reminiscent of DC punk. Listening to "Hot Wet Kisses In The Dark" is just as good as partaking in getting and giving hot wet kisses in the dark- the spat out vocals and the patient beat of the drum just might bring your lips closer to someone else's. One of the instrumental tracks on the disk, "Where the Hawks Fly," has fast become my favorite- the way the toms are hit and the way the guitar flows along- it's slightly jam band-ish but the parts are so perfect that it's forgivable. This is the kind of avant-garde post-punk that I enjoy. This post-punk/post-rock band is plausible, progressive, and hard-hitting. And there you go, a potential new favorite band for me. Kudos! **Celste Tabora**

New Bomb Turks "The Night Before The Earth Stood Still" (Gearhead)- This is a tough one, a new New Bomb Turks record to review. I can remember buying their first album, "Destroy-Oh-Boy" in 1993 and some of the dozens of 7's that they issued after that. If you recall the album when it came out, it was definitely a kick in the pants- blazing hot garage punk that seemed like they channeled the Dictators and the MC5 30 years on. A classic album that still stands up, it seemed as if The NBTs set a high standard and then slowly fell into the habit of repeating themselves, to a lesser effect each time. When I was hired to promote their "Nightmare Scenario" album for Epitaph, I don't remember even listening to it. Nowadays, Crypt Records is barely alive anymore and the New Bomb Turks are one of many Stookey acts (including the White Stripes/Hives hype snowball) out there. Can they still pull off some choice moments of greasy garage? The first few tracks show the band drifting in a few different directions. There's the twangy guitar refrains of the title track, and the Nuggets-meets-B52s track, "Pretty Lightning," a surprise of a loud garage pop song. There's a feeling of a kind of Stonies, southern rock feel to their dragstrip rock. Decent, but nothing amazing until the speedy 5th track, "Grifted" which features some great saxophone squawk. "Leaving Town" is a good track which shows a further departure in a more melodic, less frenzied rock sound with a discernable vocal hook. Then there's the track "Like Ghosts" which is pretty out of place, sounding like a singer-songwriter trying to play over very loud ambient bar noise. Not bad but not really what you'd expect knowing their roots. It's still got that smarmy, greasy rock energy, but it seems like the NBTs might be moving in a new direction. For now, it's somewhat unsure footing. **dup**

Northstar "Is This Thing Loaded" (Triple Crown)- Wow, it's amazing how far and wide the Long Island sound (no pun intended) has made it- to Alabama in this case. Northstar rip off everything from Glassjaw's vocal prowess, to the Movielife and Taking Back Sunday's hardcore leanings, to Brand New's pop sensibility... just not nearly as well as any of the above. A shitty recording/production job does not help matters. Although the guitars are flat and lifeless in the mix, the band shows that writing good songs is no problem. Rather it is the perfect execution of the tunes that poses a quandary. God, I hear so much sloppiness in this recording that I'm almost tempted to ask why Triple Crown released these songs in this form. Save your money on this one. **Ross Siegel**

Original Sinners (Nitro)- The setting couldn't have been more perfect: Los Angeles, California in the late 1970's. Emerging from the smoldering ashes of sex, alcohol, and cocaine fueled rock and roll excess along the Sunset Strip came a new crop of bands. Slopier and more uncouth than anyone headlining the Troubadour, the only appropriate phrase to describe this new breed was the decline of western civilization. Leading this crop of bands, alongside the likes of the notorious Germs and the WeirDOS was the band X. Fronted by the voluptuous Exene Cervenka, X embodied the desperation of Los Angeles' non rock & roll elite, painting pictures of LA as a city of

base sin and licentiousness. What set X apart from their fellow punk rock contemporaries was the fact that they embraced as much of the Sex Pistols and Ramones into their sound as they did Gene Vincent or Duane Eddy, setting the tone for another little known LA band by the name of Social Distortion to come along and take the sound to the masses. Original Sinners is X front woman Exene's new band. The band plays the same country infused punk songs, although this time there isn't even the slightest hint of the brash attitude once found in her work. The songs are unimaginative, uncreative, and often times just half assed imitations of the band she once fronted. The arrangements never stray from what you would expect from any stereotypical rockabilly band, which leaves Original Sinners only to rely on the fact that they have one of the original women of punk fronting their band and let me tell you that doesn't redeem this one. Like the post-Aerosmith band The Joe Perry Project or the latest incarnation of the Misfits, some potentially great music gets watered down and lost the more and more times you rehash and paraphrase from the original. **Aaron Lefkove**

Ozma "The Double Donkey Disc" (Kung Fu Records)— Does this label ever put out a record that will appeal to anyone over the age of 16? The song titles (choice examples — "Flight of the Bootmaster," "The Business of Getting Down") and the album cover (two donkeys playing balalaikas) threw me off for a while. It's not hard to notice that these guys are shooting for something different, because they want you to notice it. But from the moment you start to listen to this, it begins to fall short. I was bracing myself for something unique, but as it turns out, this band is basically Weezer with keyboards. They've got everything down, even vocals that sound like Rivers. I can only wonder what these guys would sound like if they didn't each own a copy of *Pinkerton*, and don't try to tell me that they don't, because they're writing songs exactly in that vein. They've got it down to a science practically; the resemblance is too blatant to miss. But they're not exactly the same— unlike Weezer, Ozma is striving to be different by being weird. Only it's not very appealing. It's one thing when a band is weird without trying, but it's an entirely different story when it's obviously been planned out. I'll pass on this. **Tyler Bussey**

Palomar II (Self Starter Foundation)— Ever wondered what That Dog would have been like with the kitchiness of third wave ska band? Palomar II must have because they built a whole disc upon this concept. The guitar sounds like it's powered by Red Bull and Fun Dip, the rest of the band's instrumentation— particularly the vocals make me relive my nightmares of Munchkins who discovered indie rock and decided to play it. "Lesion" and "Up!" are reminiscent of your local arts high school production where the cast is overconfident but the talent is passable. You know, some bands can get away with having a good idea but bad follow through (also known as "better on paper"), but that doesn't apply here. This album is cute, but good in concept or in result it is not. **Celeste Tabora**

The Pattern "Real Feelness" (Lookout!)— It took me forever to sit and review this record. Every time I went to put it in the player I had to get my ass off the couch and practice some sassy dancing in front of the mirror. Honestly, I just get swept away by the kind of '70's rock vibe The Pattern provide — just ask the laughing furniture upholstery factory workers across the alley that can witness my uncontrollable swaggering. So if Mr. Editor-In-Chief is wondering where my reviews are... it's not my fault! It's The Pattern's! Christopher Applegren's unforgettable thin voice is the heart of the band's sound. "Thunder Us" would sound like any motor city type rock and roll band but as Applegren repeats the words "straddle my heart" over and again it can just make everyone go over the top with excitement! They will rock you right to one of their bombastic live shows where you can witness this band's enticing and exciting live show! Does this band need a go-go dancer? If so, where can I sign up? God knows I'm well practiced in oscillating my arms, hips, head, and legs around to these bouncy, raw, attitude-abundant tunes. Get this disc, rehearse your moves and maybe you can dance with me too. Worth hitting repeat to dance to (just one more time): "You or You," "Mary's Sister," and "The Best Hate The Rest." **Celeste Tabora**

Pele "Enemies" (Polyvinyl)— Yeah, these boys have it right. This is music for the "now" generation. They caught my attention within the first seconds of the CD with rhythmic handclaps and a tinny guitar that pans left to right. The players on this album expose that they are not only good musicians, they are clever songwriters as well. Guitars playing separate melodies together and working for each other— instead of causing an international pop overthrow! There are parts that will make your mouth water— the sophisticated drum rolls and inventive parts including instruments like a double bass, thumb piano, fan, and of course an avant-garde staple: a computer. Songs run from two minutes to nine minutes, each having its own story though none of the songs own any vocals. That's right,

instrumentals. "Hooves" is calm and earthy, where "Hospital Sports" sounds more futuristically organic. Pele doesn't undermine the opinion of today's music fan, they are not for the short-attention span era. Pele is into building a sonic impression, they don't follow the pop formula. They provide room for you to appreciate their indie/jazz influenced songs. And like the wise Depeche Mode once stated, "Words are very unnecessary." After all, words are only one way of communicating. **Celeste Tabora**

Phantomsmasher (Ipecac)— Ooh, I've been waiting for this, my first review of an Ipecac release. The idea of Mike Patton's imprint label is pretty interesting in concept itself. "Here's all the stuff that I like that no one else seems to be able to release." Phantomsmasher makes a great mix of samples, electronic noise and live instruments to make an almost rock version of "blip-hop"-fragmented, beat-prevalent music with a patchwork feel to it. With a member named DJ Speedranch ("Audiomulch Vocals") and James Plotkin doing "Wave Editing," this is adventurous stuff. Lots of chopped samples and chaotic drumming in spots, this manages to make a nice twist on the formula of clicky, heavily edited music. For nutty experimental noise, this might drive some people away, but the insistent drumming and bass/guitar will more likely interest more people than usual. All they need to do is give this stuff a chance. Artwork by Aaron Turner. **dup**

The Promise Ring "Wood/Water" (Anti)— When The Promise Ring first started releasing records I thought I was going to shoot myself in the face. I hated them. There was even one point where I solely blamed The Promise Ring for ruining the lighter side of independent music. Yeah, I know, that was a bit excessive, but the point here, in case you have missed it, is I really really hated these guys, their music, their hair, their hometowns, and especially their mothers. Received for review: The Promise Ring: *Wood/Water*. Oh joy. I sighed when I saw this stowed away among my CDs to review pile. How could I not? The Promise Ring sandwiched between Mastodon and Killswitch Engage? Come now. Not off to a good start, nonetheless, all's well that ends well. Yes, I enjoy The Promise Ring's new album. Repeat that and I'll kill you. *Wood/Water* creates a truly serene and tranquil atmosphere that is pleasant, agreeable, and believable. Whereas most "emo" (God, I hate that word) bands may achieve the two former adjectives, they altogether lack the latter. This is my main gripe with this music, and with The Promise Ring's earlier efforts. Within *Wood/Water*, maturity is at an all time high, hence transcending the trite and phony characteristics that commonly plague this scene's material. For a relaxed and gentle listening experience, I recommend *Wood/Water*. It is pure, and most importantly, devoid of the garbage that turns off "emo's" non-fans. MTV's current slew of "emo" darlings should take note. **Joe Vespa**

The Pupils (Dischord)— I'm excited about this band. I'm most excited about how they don't sound excited themselves, not for one minute on the album. Since I must compare, for lack of common reference terms, I am going to pull out the names Uncle Tupelo and Neutral Milk Hotel. Give "All The People" or "Witness The Sidewalk Weeping Pools Of Martian Brine" a spin. The Pupils' lo-fi sound is not something characteristic of the Dischord punk society— but don't you like a little something surprising once in awhile? The simple swing and sauntering of The Pupils' guitars are surely going to be an underground classic and how refreshing! (Their visually pleasing minimalist album artwork is nothing to scoff at either.) There's a screeching part caused by any number of instruments (it's unlisted on the liner notes) on "Lamb With Human Hands" that will make any high-brow indie fan, well, raise their brows! It's quite a foreign noise, yet enjoyable — if you're in an experimental mood, let's say around 2 a.m. The lyrics are not about anything specifically understandable by the common human condition. Perhaps there are underlying meanings of life, love, death, regret, and all other communal emotions usually presented in today's alternative songs — but without a psychological meeting with the band, you wouldn't be pinpoint it. This album is definitely for the mature and adventurous listener, and if I'm talking about you— go out and get The Pupils. **Celeste Tabora**

Purity's Failure "Deconstruction: Songs of Innocence and Experience" (Goodfellow)— From the cozy 'ville of Wakefield, Massachusetts comes this lurching, dynamic tech-metal outfit. Frankly, I don't get the geography but I sure get the style. Lots of time changes, labored grinding riffs and bass-heavy speed all get thrown together with a very appropriate singer. Whoever he is, the vocalist can pull a lot out of a basic screaming style. It's a pretty balanced mix of treble and bass, no shrieking and no deep Cannibal Corpse-like growling, and it's not impossible to tell what he's singing about. Purity's Failure has got the angular side and it's not particularly dance-ready, but the astonishing thing here is just

how accessible this is— here's one of those records where you can almost imagine who'd enjoy it. You could refer to this as metal-core, but it's got a hell of a lot more than that going on. For a band I've never heard of before, this is an invigorating slapping-around. It's well played and sounds really good. **dup**

Randy "Cheater" (Burning Heart) EP— Interesting, that another domestic label released a Burning Heart record besides Epitaph. Randy, an outstanding name for a band (I knew this old German band called "Randy Pie" which might be better) is a damn good loud garage punk band that has strong catchy songs. Sounding like a more wild Headcoats, these presumably Swedish guys got their 70's melodic punk sound working nicely. "Addicts Of Communication" boasts a great streetpunk style chorus and their whole style has a strong drum-heavy head nodability to it. They remind me of Turbonegro if that band listened to more Blitz or other really catchy oi. This is a sizzling slab of hot garage, as Crypt used to say. 6 tracks. **dup**

The Red + The Black "Plans For Next Year Ep" (Self Starter Foundation) EP— A nice mellow rock sound here that doesn't reek of touchy emo, the heavily bashable sound of today. There's an almost Marr sound to the guitarwork, which finds a more punk-leaning crescendo here and there (but never for long). It's good stuff with a certain energy that is a nice change from screaming and growling. Real singing can be a surprisingly soothing thing. There's one song here that's got a bit more drive than the rest, "Movie Memories," which chugs along at a good clip from the beginning to end. Even on a more aggressive track, the guitars still ring out clearly and the vocals are just as effective. Good stuff on the calmer side, 5 tracks. **dup**

The Reunion Show "Kill Your Television" (Victory)— A better magazine editor might have the good sense to pass on the newest disc by a band that released their debut record on his own label. However, I am who I am, and I think I am more qualified to review the newest Reunion Show record than anyone else in the press world. After all, I met the band in a New York City club long before they built a loyal following all over the nation (their drummer and I were introduced while peeing... FYI). I saw them grow from an endearing, yet inexperienced, pop-band while their popularity grew almost daily. I can tell you with perfect honesty that this band has improved so much from their admirable beginnings, and this record is an imminently likable pop-record that draws equally from popular music and punk. After giving this record a few dozen spins in my stereo I am convinced that "Star Training" and "Drop It" will make this band a huge success in the underground and eventually the mainstream: This is surely not Radiohead, or even a band with any experimental or pretentious artistic aspirations. It is, however, a very very solid pop record for those who like to dance around their room and bob their heads to the perfect soundtrack to a high school kegger. **Ross Siegel**

Rilo Kiley "The Execution of All Things" (Saddle Creek)— I saw this band open up for Connor Oberst's rock and roll experiment, the Desaparcidos, a few months ago and thought they were great. Their blend of country shuffle-beats and southwestern female crooning with indie-rock textures and tones was really moving. Then I found that the band's frontwoman, Jenny Lewis, was Fred Savage's co-star in that epic saga of the Nintendo age, (does anyone even know what Nintendo is anymore?) The Wizard; and Shelley Long's co-star in one of the worst teeny-bopper movies of the 1980's, *Troop Beverly Hills*— I had the misfortune of seeing both flicks. I will admit to having a big crush on the precocious redhead girl who years later has found herself fronting this wonderful band, apparently on loan to Saddle-Creek from Barsuk records. I'd say this record is a pretty good mix of Aimee Mann, Suzanne Vega, and Mary Lou Lord— all wrapped up in a country feeling. This is a beautiful record that will no doubt receive play in my stereo for some time to come. I've got to interview this band. **Ross Siegel**

The Rise "Signal to Noise" (Ferret Music)— Sometimes it seems as though bands want to be political and innovative so much that they forget to make music that people will really like and The Rise is a good example. Technically these songs very well put together. The recording on the actual instruments and the vocals is really crisp, but the singer's voice lacks the true impact I like to hear with a scream, especially with so much going on musically in the background. The lyrics are political but in a way that isn't specific enough to inspire you to go out and be an activist. The only things that really stand out here are the electronic elements. The sixth track on the disc, "Station Identification for the Printless", is entirely jungle electronic and I think that it's the best song of the bunch. The individual parts are here but the problem with this lies in bringing it

all together into songs that people will really be able to get into. It seems like all of the samples come in either the intros or the outros with only cheesy effects thrown into the middle. It lacks in transition. If you like Refused then you will most likely get a kick out of this record, the first song even sounds suspiciously like "New Noise". Wait a second... "New Noise"... *Signal to Noise*. I smell a punk rock conspiracy. **Stan Horaczek**

Rocket from the Crypt "Live From Camp X-Ray" (Vagrant)- When Rocket from the Crypt plays they are preaching to the choir one of the most soulful, energetic, and rambunctious gatherings found anywhere in punk rock. Still, you see the same faces at Rocket shows year after year. It may be because the band instills such a profound sense of loyalty in their fans who sport Rocket from the Crypt tattoos by the armful or it may be because the band has progressed very little since their inception almost 15 years ago. Sure their songs are catchy and rock and roll intensified with the best of them. Yes almost every song on every one of the band's numerous releases is a winner. But Rocket is still playing the same ballsy, gutsy, spirited punk rock it was 10 years ago when they first broke through to the mainstream. While other rock and roll bands with a fraction of the staying power garner more commercial and popular appeal, Rocket has remained true to their roots and have done a great job year after year. So what if every song sounds the same... I could listen to the song "Too Many Balls" a million times in a row with ease. **Ross Siegel**

Shadows Fall "The Art of Balance" (Century Media)- Have you ever noticed how metal band/song/album names sound almost-but-not-quite poetic? Maybe it's that the heavy metal medium is inherently unpoetic which casts a shadow of doubt over anything the least bit profound within the music. Or, perhaps the bands in the metal world are simply not smart enough (broad generalization, I know) to create anything vaguely related to "art" in the classical sense of the word. Listen to Shadows Fall's song titles on this record: "Idle Hands," "Casting Shade," "Thoughts Without Words," "Mystery of An Spirit," so close yet so far, guys. Regardless this sounds like a less interesting, more cliché Pantera to me. **Ross Siegel**

Sick of it All "Live in a Dive" (Fat Wreck)- With few exceptions I've never been a big fan of live records. Generally they do little to bridge the gap between studio records and the visceral chaos of a live show. Sometimes, though, bands that can never quite capture their true essence in the comfort of a fancy studio succeed in making an interesting recording as well as transcending the live/recorded gap. With that said Sick of it All are a great hardcore band who have made a pretty solid live recording. The recording is very good which makes it entertaining from start to finish. The record's only drawback being that the show in question was recorded in the unlikely location of San Francisco instead of the obvious choice of New York City, the town for which Sick of it All remains the quintessential hardcore act. **Ross Siegel**

Sinners And Saints "The Sky Is Falling" (Bridge Nine)- One of those albums where the label seems to tell you about it before you listen to the record, this is a nice surprise. Total melodic hard rock with the punk rock lick of approval, this is just the thing for the hardcore/garage rock crossover audience— even if one has yet to exist. If you're not afraid to nod your head, casting off the indie rock demons intent on keeping you bitter, and enjoy some good catchy stuff. It's got a Cheap Trick/Raspberries sound to it, but there's a bit of Kiss in the mix as well as a Foo Fighters/Weezer type modern rock sound. Some of it has a bit more crunch to it, but there is some clean-cut, pressed and starched, gleaming white teeth harmonies here that might throw off some people. Then again, there's some very Axl Rose-ish vocals on some tracks that really irritate me, even though they're decently delivered. Maybe the influences are a bit up front here, but it certainly doesn't mean that they haven't crafted a good sounding album that sounds better with a few beers. A quick nine songs that have enough hooky guts to ignore the GNR track or 2 and make this a keeper, indie cred and all. **dup**

Snappcase "End Transmission" (Victory Records)- There's not much I can say about this. I still don't get the appeal this style of hardcore, with an all-too-serious "political" intent ("Revolt for evolution / Get off of this planet now / We've got the escape plan blueprint / Get off this planet now / There's hope for a revolution / Revolt!") and repetitive riffs stretched out for more than 45 minutes. There's just barely enough variation for it to not stay the same all the way through. Whenever I read "professional" rock critics' views on punk rock, they seem to unanimously agree that nearly all of it sounds the same, but if the same statement doesn't apply to metal, then I must be crazy. The other day I was bored out of my mind,

channel surfing, when I came to Much Music. There was this show called Uranium on, which had always been a metal show, but the funny thing was that Snappcase was the band being interviewed. I used to hear quite a lot about the hardcore/metal crossover, and every now and then, I see a bitter hardcore kid at odds with present-day ideas of what hardcore is. But now, I hardly ever see it. The lines are being blurred; hardcore bands can play with metal bands, because they don't sound too different when you get down to it. I missed most of the interview. All I remember of what the band said was something about how they feel that they are more unique than most bands out there, or something to that extent. Still bored, I watched the remainder of the interview. And then a Korn video came on. I actually watched it, too! And then my head started to hurt, so I turned off the TV. **Tyler Bussey**

Spoon "Kill the Moonlight" (Merge)- I'm sorry, but every time I see a picture of Spoon's Britt Daniel, I get the feeling that he went to private school and drove an SUV and got laid a lot in high school, and for some reason, that really bugs me. In a way, his songs just reinforce my admittedly unsubstantiated feelings of hatred (jealousy?) toward this dude. Spoon's songs are well written and the jangle is infectious at times (especially on "That's How We Get By"), but they're very by-numbers and don't have a whole lot of character or personality— just like Daniel's SUV driving, asshole cronies. This record is supposed to be what punk kids listen to when they get old enough to pay their own utilities, but if I ever start listening to this shit all the time, you all have permission to kick my ass. That's vague, I know, but three songs into this record I went to get a snack, ended up watching a Halloween special on the Disney Channel, and when I came back Sparta was playing and I really didn't feel like listening to any more Spoon. I just wasn't in the mood. If you are a die hard Britt Daniel fan (i.e. you never miss a college football game), instead I recommend picking up his split EP with Conor Oberst if you can find it; because when Daniel's not in the limelight, he really shines. **Jonah Bayer**

Starflyer 59 "Can't Stop Eating" (Tooth & Nail) EP- You know, I always avoided Tooth and Nail releases. Contrary to what they might say (or not say, if you know what I mean) on the label's website one can't deny that all their music has some relation to religion and God, usually of the Christian variety. Now, I have nothing against God, besides the fact that I do not believe that there a God, and I have nothing at all against Christianity other than the fact that I want to have nothing to do with religion of any kind, but I do not like God or religion in my pop music of any sort. I don't care how subtle or peripheral that religion may be; if I think a band may be using pop music as a vehicle to exercise their faith, well, then I find that ridiculous and I refuse to be a part. My stubbornness has probably prevented me from hearing some (not much, mind you) rather good music out there in the "spirit-filled" music realm. Case in point: Starflyer 59 are pretty fucking good at what they do—which is pretty much ripping off Slowdive. The music is beautifully soothing and ethereal. Sure they give "All Praise & Glory To Jesus Christ Our Lord & Savior" but other than that I cannot discern any missionary-like tactics here trying to lure me into being a believer. Plus the version of "Give up the War" found on this EP is absolutely fall-out-of-your-seat gorgeous. Nice job guys, I will eagerly be buying up this band's back catalog and keeping it right next to my copy of the Satinist's Bible. **Ross Siegel**

The Stryder "Jungle City Twitch" (Equal Vision)- I actually reviewed this record a few months ago for another publication and I hated it. I mean the press release says that this, "bridges the gap between the emo punk world that birthed the Long Island rockers and the experimental, almost trip hop fused sound they have invented." Hmm, that's a bit lofty, don't ya think? But after listening to this now, I definitely like it better than my initial listen. It took me a while to make it past the limmerick-riddled/clichéd lyrics like "I'm just a man on the street/ I got shoes on my feet/ you always get what you want/ but do you get what you need?" Dude, STOP! And while I don't think they have "invented" their own sound, they do add some new elements to the post-punk/Weezer game, which keep this from sounding totally derivative. I'll still probably trade this in, but I'll hesitate before I put it in my reject pile, which is more than I can say for any album by the Groovie Ghoules. **Jonah Bayer**

The Suicide File (Indecision) EP- You know what? Right off the bat, I am going to give this 6 song EP a "Fuck Yeah." Ok. Ready? Fuck Yeah. Here we have a no frills punk/hardcore CD that is what may be the result of Endeavor raping The Nerve Agents

with a working uniqueness and quirkiness ala Endeavor. Open-minded fans of the aforementioned bands should have some new rock to latch onto here. Perfectly paced for a skank, and with the vocals screaming for sing-alongs and fingerpoints, I believe this will be a crowd-pleaser in no time flat. Fuck yeah. **Joe Vespa**

Superdrag "Last Call For Vitriol" (Arenas Rock)- It's not a surprise that Superdrag have the rock-pop-confection style down. These boys been at it for awhile, from indie to major to indie again with side projects galore. Their guitar tunings and effects are envied by many guitar driven power pop bands. For you diehard Superdrag fans, you know the band's signature style is far from their hit back in the mid '90s "Sucked Out." The band has always made an example of their fondness of the soul inspired rock n' roll of the 60s. I enjoyed when they touch upon The Beatles' sweet spirit in "Her Melancholy Tune" and when they struck on the mod influence during "Baby Goes To Eleven." It was when they reminded me of The Offspring's quirky cheap punk (no, I don't consider that a good thing by the way) in "The Staggering Genius" that I was thrown for a loop. Don't worry—the rest of the album is good ol' Superdrag brand rock and roll which is straightforward, to-the-point poppy rock driven with impeccable guitar tones. This Nashville/Brooklyn band sticks to the norm with their lyrical content— consisting of fragments of life and love's tales. You can't deny Superdrag's superior ability for crafting a good rock song, especially with this release. **Celeste Tabora**

Thirty-Two Frames (Revelation)- Hey guys, nice layout. Did you run out of quarters at your Kinko's kiosk? Seriously, remember when Louisville had all those great bands around the time of the first Krazyfest? You know, By the Grace of God, The Enkindels, Elliott, etc. Well the dudes in this band can't get past that that era so they all banded together to create a new band and try to re-live those days. And while this is a solid hardcore record, I don't think it's going to re-vitalize their scene. Thirty-Two Frames is a quintessential Louisville band in the aspect that they put their own twist on the hardcore genre and come up with something somewhat unique—they're just five years too late and no one cares anymore. Well, maybe someone cares, but I sure don't. Plus, the fact that they put twenty-something celebs like Jason Schwartzman, Gideon Yago and Brandon from Jackass on their thanks list just re-enforces the delusional world these guys live in. Yo, Gideon, since you and the band are so tight, when's 32-Frames' MTV special airing? Riiiiight. **Jonah Bayer**

Thursday "Five Stories Falling" (Victory) EP- By now, Thursday's eagerness to escape their supposedly restricting contract with Victory is news to no one. I'm guessing this CD was Victory's way of making a few extra bucks— with good reason, this CD is sure to sell at least 50,000 copies— and Thursday's way of thumbing their nose at the label that released their monumentally wonderful record *Full Collapse*. I think generally everyone agrees: Thursday is a great band, but this EP is fucking awful and a waste of money for any Thursday fan. Out of 5 songs, only one is a studio original with the others being live recordings. Unfortunately, the quality of performance and recording on the live songs is so sub-par I'm almost pained to listen to this disc. Maybe I never realized the sad truth all those times I excitedly danced to "Autobiography of a Nation" but this band is pretty terrible live. Flaws: 1) Geoff simply cannot sing. He is just about as tone-deaf as any singer I've heard in the past few years. It doesn't help matters that his voice is so high in the mix. 2) The guitars are out of tune and are sometimes not quite keeping up with the drums. 3) The band proves that you don't have to be tight and in sync to sell a quarter of a million records. 4) The artwork for this record is embarrassing. I could have done better artwork using Microsoft Word as a layout program. On a side note, the new song, "Jet Black New Year," is incredible—it is one of the best the band has ever written, and that is saying a lot. Verdict: enjoy Thursday's records and bask in their sonic chaos live, just be sure to bring earmuffs. **Ross Siegel**

Time In Malta "A Second Engine" (Equal Vision)- Damn, Time in Malta are so good. Even though this is only their first full-length (which took them around the same amount of time that most bands need to record three full-lengths), this San Francisco trio-cum-quartet has become one of the most respected aggressive rock outfits in all of California. Musically, Time In Malta are drawing as much from Seattle hardcore bands like Botch as they do from tour-mates, Snappcase. This record shows their song-writing solidifying into kick-box fueled head-bobbing madness that gets tighter and catchier every year. This doesn't destroy any old-fashioned ideas of hardcore—Time In Malta are not re-writing the book by any stretch—but they are a very good hardcore band that plays attractive and powerfully catchy rock and roll. Recommended. **Ross Siegel**

Track Star "Lion Destroyed The Whole World" (Better Looking Records)- Am I wrong or did music begin as a form of communication? And didn't it evolve to an artform to help us communicate an emotion or a message? Is that idea lost in today's popular (and sometimes unpopular) music? Track Star has some catchy songs on this album, but here's my complaint: I'm not convinced the band means anything that the lyrics are describing. It's so fluffy and, dare I say, wishy-washy? Listen to "Green To Gold" or "Cross Country..." It sounds as if they're concentrating too hard on the quality of the song, that they have lost the feeling that we're supposed to relate to. It makes one slightly sad because you know if there was only that "oopm" to the song it would be so much better. In closing, this album is okay. **Celeste Tabora**

Transplants (Hellcat)- I never thought I'd see the day when I'd be hearing Tim Armstrong attempt to rap! The Transplants are a punk/electronic/hip hop super-group comprised of members of bands who were never known for their skills in the latter two genres. This album does for punk what Atari Teenage Riot did for hardcore. Where ATR sounded like a Minor Threat LP played at 45 RPM's through a metal distortion pedal, Transplants sound like the slower, darker more rhythmic hip hop equivalent. Lots of Rancid flavored guitar lines, paired with synth loops and breakbeats courtesy of Lint himself backed up with drumming held down by Blink 182's Travis Barker. MC and sometime vocalist Rob Aston sings in a style reminiscent of another DMS/U.S. Thugs frontman, Freddy Madball, with sharp staccato lines sometimes shouted, sometimes rapped. I've always maintained that rap and punk, although similar in attitude, should never be mixed musically. Here the mix creates the usual outcome along the lines of Papalimpkornbizkitiroach. The Transplants at times have the right mixture, which come when not relying too heavily on the "yo yo son" tough ass white boy rapping. Songs like "D.J.D.J.", "Sad But True," (not a Metallica Cover!!!) and "One Seventeen" stand out on this album. This sounds nothing like Blink, Rancid, AFI or Skarhead. Fans of the aforementioned bands may be turned off initially, much like myself, but after a few repeat listens one can see the natural progression that these guys have taken from their day jobs. Out of catchy upbeat melodic pop punk is spawned dark rhythmic electropunk. A little less on the rapping and these guys could be onto something hot. **Aaron Lefkove**

Tsunami Bomb "The Ultimate Escape" (Kung Fu)- You know what? I'm over it. I've been over it since I discovered Tilt. Why do bands like this pretend like they're creating their own songs? Each song sounds like it's practically a cover anyway. So you know how to steal and rearrange a few chords from other bands that weren't very good to begin with and are literate enough to write lyrics. Woo f'n hoo for you. Go ahead, give "Russian Roulette" a spin and tell me that you don't hear Save Ferris' swing-ska blended with The Distillers' punk-rock. Or try "The Simple Truth" and its tendencies of sounding like Weezer with its power pop pauses and harsh guitar riffs. Hell, take any of their songs off any of their releases. I dare you to honestly tell me you've never heard anything like it. It's good to be influenced by many different types of bands, but sometimes it's better in theory to mix it all up. Hey T. Bomb, thank you for littering the world with yet another CD that is headed for the used bin. Your fears are right on, there are better bands out there doing in a fashion that far surpasses your band. P.S. Just because you're not in a boy band doesn't mean you're cool. **Celeste Tabora**

Twelve Hour Turn "Perfect Progress Perfect Destruction" (No Idea)- This band had some kick-ass songs floating around on seven-inches and comps back in the day, so I was really pleased to receive this in my review pile. The thing that made Twelve Hour Turn exciting a few years ago was their ability to split the energy and the feel of their songs between voices. Often, the feel (triumphantly melodic and beautifully conservative) was carried by the guitars, while most of the raw energy came more from the vocals. The songs would dance around their big moments until they found a perfect time to culminate, and there would be an emotional and visceral swell that it became increasingly dangerous to drive to. This album makes valiant attempts at a similar sound, and though a bit of the energy has gone out of the vocals and some of the sublimity has left the instruments, each song carries itself through thoughtfully to climax and conclusion, simultaneously finding its place within the album as a whole. Enjoy. **Adam Parks**

Unearth "Endless" (Eulogy)- Unearth play the tightest and heaviest in metal, and for some reason, often find a "core" tacked on to the end of their genre. Likely, this is because their screaming vocals are direct descendants of Converge and contemporaries, and possibly because they feel the need to incorporate now-typically hardcore elements such as "emo parts" and big generic breakdowns with low E emerging as the favorite chord. Aside from these aspects, they

earn the "metal" part of their label with tap solos, wailing harmonized riffs and more double-bass than I've heard in several years. Also galloping guitar lines, let's not forget. Anyway, it's a well recorded and pretty well-written record, if not a little derivative, and it does a fabulous job of combining the rock'n' fun of metal with the angsty energy of hardcore. See you in church. **Adam Parks**

The Vandals "Internet Dating Superstuds" (Kung Fu)- Demerit 1: The only musician I can think of who wears his own band's T-shirts in videos or promo photos is Joe Elliott of Def Leopard. Dave Quackenbush, the Vandal's singer—who sounds like a punk version of Brian Wilson—is the second, as he sports a Vandals shirt in the insert. Demerit 2: The Vandals had the privilege of being quoted in Vin Diesel's recent masterpiece, *Triple X*. Demerit 3: Among the multitude of sponsors this band has subsidizing their music making process, one is Paul Frank, the lamest fashion designer since the guy responsible for Skidz. A designer at Paul Frank Industries made the ultra-dumb cover-art for this record. Demerit 4: The music is a fraction as clever as NOFX. Conclusion: Save your cash any buy *Peace Through Vandalism* instead. **Ross Siegel**

V/A "Twenty Years of Dischord" (Dischord) 3xCD- A few weeks ago, I gave my girlfriend a 30 minute diatribe on how much I love Dischord Records and the bands that have comprised their output for the past 20 years. She looked at me, nodding the entire time, but clearly not following my talk of Minor Threat, Fugazi, Ignition, Scream, Jawbox, and more. She changed the subject, but I was still thinking about how happy I was when I received this 3 CD celebration of the label that has become synonymous with Washington DC punk. What we have here is two CDs featuring a single song from every single band ever to release something on Dischord, followed by a third CD of generally quality unreleased stuff. I'll be honest, I have a good majority of Dischord's back catalog. I'm a Washington DC punk fanatic (I also have a good percentage of Lovitt and Simple Machine's back catalog), so the two CDs worth of previously-released songs here only served as a nice mix-tape for me. The had already heard most of the unreleased stuff through the magic of the internet and CD burners. The real joy of this box set was the 130+ page booklet that comes with the set. The booklet, the same size as a CD jewel case, contained info on every single Dischord band and release, a bit about the label's early close friends, pictures of its staff, and some background factoids. That book, and the amazing set of photos that can be found on both covers of the booklet, is why this set is worth the cost (which is no doubt relatively low sense to a keen sense of proletarian Dischord politics). Definitely pick this up and check out who At the Drive-in, The Hives, The Panthers are really ripping off. **Ross Siegel**

V/A "How We Rock" (Epitaph)- Ok, any CD that opens with Turbonegro's "Age of Pamparius", a homoerotic ode to the virtues of fine Italian cuisine, will always have a certain reverie in my book. The latest Epitaph compilation veers away from their usual pop punk staple bands for a more Rock (and yes, that's Rock with a capital "R") sound. With tracks from the aforementioned denim clad warriors of the apocalypse, as well as Zeke, Randy, the Dwarves, RFTC, and heavy hitters like the Hives and the (I)NC, plus newcomers Division of Laura Lee and Danko Jones, this may just be the punkiest thing Epitaph's put out in a while. All but the Supersuckers track are available elsewhere, but who gives a rats ass when you have all these bands on one CD! Recommended for those who like both types of music...Rock and Roll. Denim jacket and mirrored aviator shades sold separately. **Aaron Lefkove**

V/A "The Worldwide Tribute To The Real Oi Vol. 2" (Triple Crown)- It's interesting that the first volume of this concept was a big enough success that a second disc was issued. Bands each cover 2 Oi/Streetpunk classics on this 27 track collection. I'm sure that bands lined up for an opportunity like this, but the best part of this volume is the slackening of the modern hardcore rendition syndrome. Punk and Oi classics do not need "toughening up" via an E-string and growl vocals—they are catchy, aggressive punk tunes already and their attitude is easily misunderstood by over-enthusiastic acts. The admittedly rough beginning of the disc starts with a trite attempt by Roger Miret and The Disasters of "England Belongs To Me." Like the first volume, Roger doesn't have the gills to voice such melodic material and changing it to "New York Belongs To Me" only ups the groan factor. The Bouncing Souls offer the *real* opener on the album 5 songs in with CockSparrer's "We're Coming Back". There are no revelations here, just a band clearly lobbing one back at an obvious influence—nice one. Their version of The

The Last Resort's "Freedom." Roger Miret and his backup do a better job on Blitz's "Voice Of A Generation" and Ignite greatly redeem themselves with a great later Business track, "Maradona" where their style works much better. No surprises with Murphy's Law and their take on The Business' "Drinking And Driving" and the Belgian streetpunk act Funeral Dress put in straight-ahead covers as well. Aside from the usual reviewer yawn of "you should know the originals" this is a very fun collection with a better than average ratio of flawed vs. favored covers. If they make it to a third disc, I'd like to see some more modern streetpunk/oi bands and continued variety of bands in general. **dup**

Viva Death (Vagrant)- It's pretty safe to say that no one cares about Face to Face anymore. Maybe that's why their drummer is currently on tour with Saves the Day and F2F's last high-profile gig was playing on *Late Night with Carson Daly* at 2:00 AM on a weekday (didn't you get the press release?). Anyway, apparently Trevor Keith found a stash of baritone guitars, called in Josh Freese of the Vandals, and wrote a bunch more songs that proved that this guy's creative well ran dry after "Disconnected" was re-released for the tenth time. This press release likens *Viva Death* to "a post-punk/nihilist political rally, chock full of artist, poets and revolutionaries." Not quite. For the most part, this sounds like a disjointed conglomeration of new wave, punk rock and straight up rock, incorporating the most boring aspects of each genre. I'm not a huge (International) Noise Conspiracy fan, but *Viva Death* basically sound like a third-rate version of T(I)NC. Sure, Josh Freese's drumming is impeccable and occasionally the band stumbles about an edgy riff (which they repeat into the ground), but for most part, *Viva Death* is boring and uninspired. Trevor, when will you learn? **Jonah Bayer**

Warsawpack "Gross Domestic Product" (G7 Welcoming Committee)- Hip hop, much like the punk movement, seems to have run its course, made its statement, and fallen off to the wayside, resigned to a life of generic mediocrity in the hands of Eminem and P. Diddy. The music, for the most part, is uninteresting and repetitive, and the rhymes have lost the urgent and political potency they once had in spades, instead relying on a series of tired clichés based around guns, money, sport utility vehicles, bitches and ho's. Warsawpack is the antithesis of all that and a breath of fresh air into what this punk ass white boy sees as a dead movement. The layout of this CD gives a detailed synopsis of the events leading up to the 9/11 attacks, as well as the tangled web of relationships between the Bush and Bin Laden families. Top that one Marshall Mathers. Musically, Warsawpack play jazzy hip hop, heavy on actual instrumentation but encompassing loops and a DJ as well. Elements of reggae, jazz, funk, and even traditional eastern melodies pervade the group's sound and lyrically they attack all of society's ills—mass marketed consumerism, corrupt politicians, and a failing US economy just to name a few. Perhaps not the most commercially viable, nor the most street credible, Warsawpack do embody the educated voice of the layman which was the catalyst that set off the rap and hip hop movement in the first place. **Aaron Lefkove**

Wretch Like Me "I am Become Death" (Owned and Operated)- This tries to sound like Rocket from the Crypt, which is fine. It also sounds kind of like Supersuckers, I think, although I'm not sure I've heard them recently. It's like Big Rock. I bet they'd be awesome live, but they don't seem that awesome on record, though it's a valiant effort. Sometimes the vocals sound like Alice in Chains. I'm doing something else now. **Adam Parks**

Yeah Yeah Yeah's "Machine" (Touch & Go) EP- The man myth and legend, known only as Meat Loaf, once said "Two out of three ain't bad." Said expression could certainly be applied to the YYY's. While I've never really gotten what this hipster than thou Williamsburg trio were trying to do and I've always maintained that they suck suck suck, I've got to admit that this new EP wasn't half bad. The band has even made a few strides in the talent department, which was seriously lacking on their last release. The band sounds like a Dadaist's version of the Gun Club or X had one of those bands been fronted by PJ Harvey. Droning Muddy Waters inspired guitar lines protrude over super simplified drumming. The title track has a certain catchiness to it, due to the surf guitar verses and stop and go breakdowns. The second song incorporates a sharp jarring rhythm juxtaposed against a funky R & B sounding chorus. The last track though really kills it. Sloppy guitar and chaotic drumming with backwards vocal loops. Maybe I'm not artsy or "intelligent" enough to get the statement they're trying to make? I'm sure these guys and gal would go over great touring with the White Stripes or whatever you kids are listening to these days. **Aaron Lefkove**

Conflict: Desert Storm



CONFLICT: AMERICAN PRIDE

Maxwell Flemming has always been a lazy fuck. He doesn't have a job, his social skills are awkward at best and his masturbation habits are all too frequent. He sleeps eleven hours a day and often times awakes in a confused sweat. To say the least, if Maxwell were to one day vanish from our country few would notice, and even less would care.

The tragic events of Sept. 11th reminded Maxwell just how worthless he was. As Americans desperately tried to cope with the unthinkable, Maxwell lay in his bed, half-awake, oblivious to the gravity of the situation. When he heard about the horrors in New York, Maxwell's first major concern did not revolve around the well being of our country, but rather the fact that the Weezer concert he had been looking forward to for weeks would probably be canceled. It was. Maxwell was depressed.

One year later Maxwell couldn't help but wonder: perhaps he wasn't as patriotic as an American should be in our time of conflict. He considered buying a mini-American flag, however, he had no SUV to attach it to. He thought about joining the Marines, but the thought of excessive physical activity worried him. Maxwell was in desperate need of an outlet to show off his true red, white, and blue spirit. Earlier last week, while Max slowly passed out to a re-run of *Family Ties*, he witnessed a commercial that promised to be the answer to all of his concerns.

The commercial was an advertisement for a Play Station 2 video game entitled *Conflict: Desert Storm*. A sniper scope appeared, and in it appeared a likeness of Saddam Hussein. Excited about this opportunity, not to mention the countless other Iraqis that would be killed, Maxwell borrowed his roommates Play Station and decided to rent the game.

Pulling together the last twenty-three dollars to his name, Maxwell hit the second hand clothing shops for the appropriate attire: Camouflage pants, army shirt, gas mask, toy gun, and an imitation gold dollar sign necklace. The next step was to call upon a friend, someone who could support him during the game both physically and emotionally. Enter Lance Cannon.

Lance and Maxwell scraped together the five dollars and change to rent the game and took a trip to Blockbuster Video. On Wednesday evening, at oh-two-hundred hours, they began to play. After passing a basic training seminar, Lance and Maxwell headed to war. Already they were feeling more patriotic.

After ten straight hours of game play, a twelve pack of Bud and a few joints, the game had reached a pinnacle of frustration. Maxwell simply could not get used to the overly complicated Play Station controller and often times severely wounded or flat out killed himself and other members of his platoon. Lance, however, was a one-man killing machine with a keen sense of what it took to be a Marine. This inspired Maxwell to try even harder.

On Saturday, at oh-two-hundred hours, Lance and Max sat down, smoked a few joints, blasted The Rolling Stones from a run-down stereo, and made a vow to one another that they wouldn't stop until every Iraqi was dead, including Saddam himself. Eight hours of continuous game play and bloodshed ensued.

In the final mission, Lance and Maxwell finally approached what they assumed to be Saddam's palace with hopes of his death in the near future. Maxwell's dream of helping his country overcome terrorism was about to come true.

However, disappointment set in when Lance and Maxwell realized that the main objective of the game was not to kill Saddam, but rather, one General Aziz, a cheap Saddam impersonator. *Conflict: Desert Storm* billed itself as a chance to re-fight the Gulf War from the comforts of one's own home. History was rewritten in the video game when the squad Maxwell and Lance commanded entered the streets of Baghdad, something that never happened in the actual Gulf War. Why couldn't the games creators have allowed our heroes the final catharsis of taking down Saddam themselves they cried out?

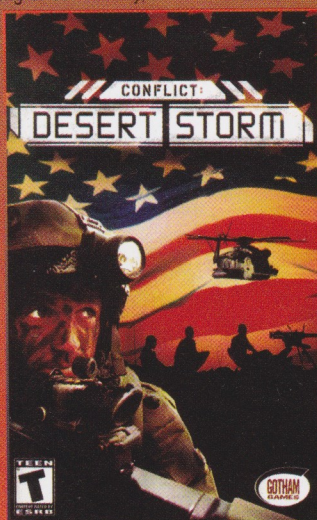
Depressed, angry, and bored, Lance and Maxwell agreed that *Conflict: Desert Storm* had been a waste of time and had done nothing to lift their patriotic spirits.

And so, Maxwell returned to his normal routine of over-sleeping, social awkwardness, and abnormal masturbation habits. In his closet now hangs a pair of camouflage pants and a gas mask. A gentle reminder of the twenty-two hours Maxwell gave his country all that he had to give.

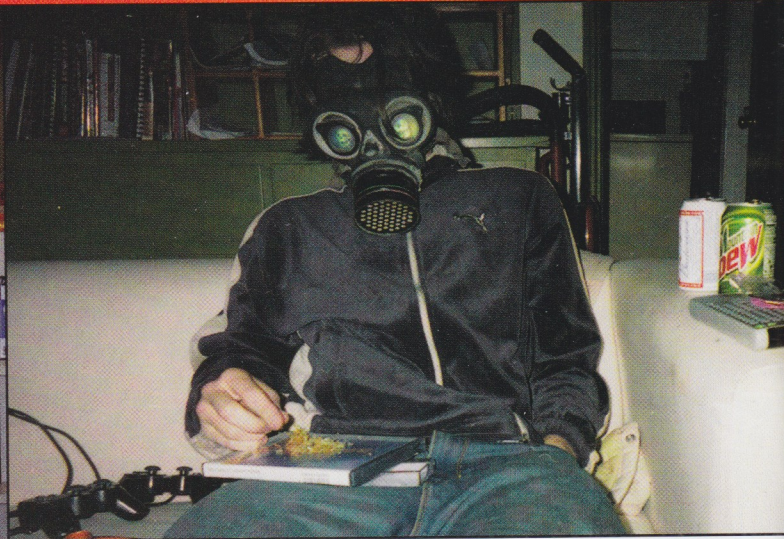
Having given up re-runs of '80's sitcoms, MSNBC, CNN, and the FOX News Channel now run on three separate TVs, 24 hours a day in Maxwell's room. He is eagerly awaiting Bush Jr. to finish the fight his father started so developers at Rockstar Games can begin the sequel to *Conflict: Desert Storm*. We can only hope he will be given the chance to kill the actual Saddam this time.

God Bless.

WORDS: COLONEL JOHN BRADLEY | PHOTOS: PRIVATE JACK SWEEN



Maxwell Flemming Salutes America



Lance Cannon Prepares to Kill Iraqis

A STATIC LULLABY

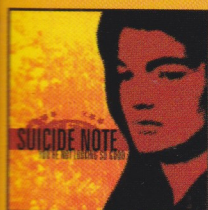
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EVERY TIME I DIE LAST NIGHT IN TOWN

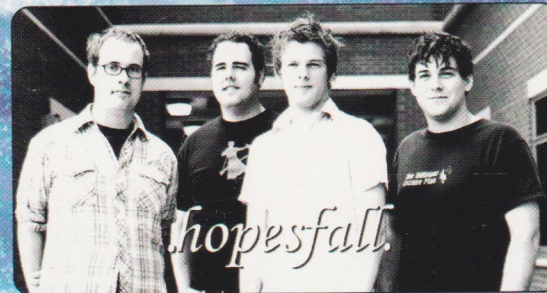
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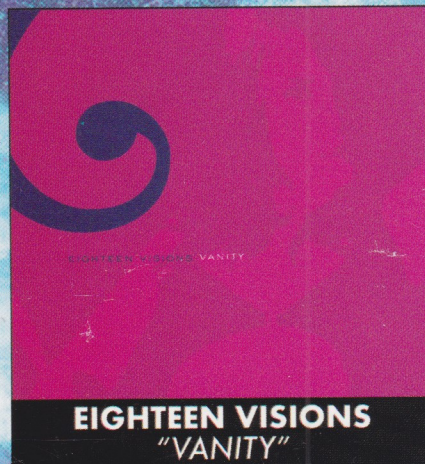
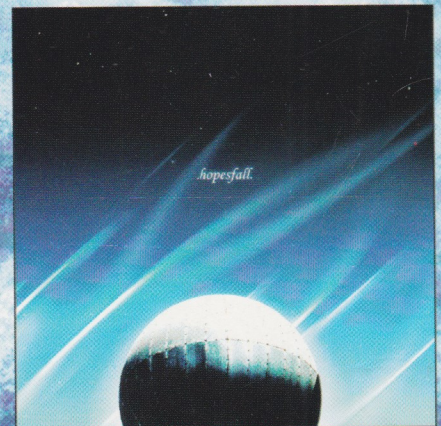
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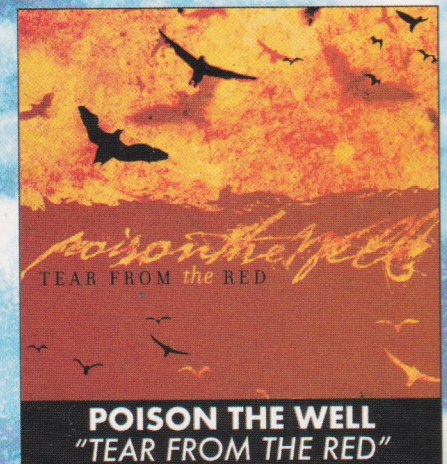
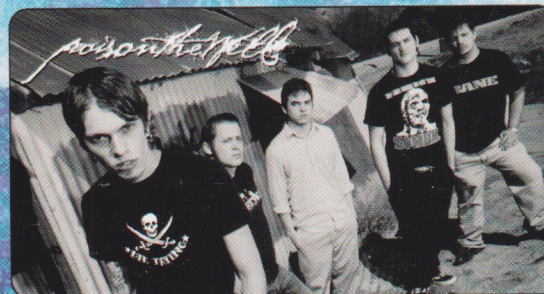
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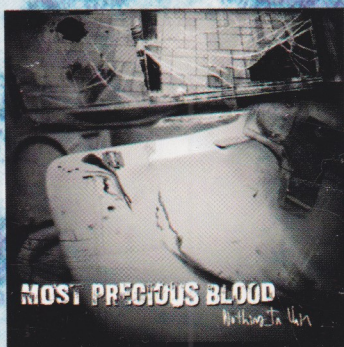
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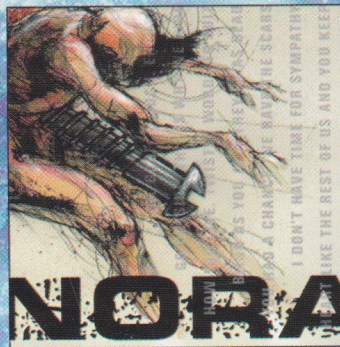
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